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ABSTRACT

A survey was done of students participating in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) between 1989/90 and 1991/92 to ascertain student attitudes toward their study abroad experience. About one third of the students from the three yearly cohorts responded to the survey (cohorts numbered 553, 753, and 883 respectively). More than half of the ECTS students were between 21 and 23 years old at the time they went abroad with the program. Across the 3 years, 56 percent of the students were male and about 40 percent reported that at least one parent had been awarded a higher education degree. Major motives for study abroad were learning a foreign language, self-development, improvement of career prospects, desire to experience academic learning in another country, and desire to enhance understanding of the host country. Preparatory provisions were rated 3.1 on a scale from 1 (very good) to 5 (very poor). On average, students in 1991/92 took 18.8 hours of courses per week with instruction usually in the language of the host country. Serious problems regarding credits and transfer of credits were reported at the same rate in 1990/91 as in 1991/92. ECTS students in 1991/92 rated their academic progress abroad more positively than academic progress during a corresponding period at home. Knowledge of the host country culture and society also increased substantially. (JB)

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Friedhelm Maiworm
Ulrich Teichler

The First Years of ECTS in the View of the Students

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Reihe WERKSTATTBERICHTE

ERASMUS Monographs No. 20

Friedhelm Maiworm
Ulrich Teichler

THE FIRST YEARS OF ECTS IN THE VIEW OF THE STUDENTS

WERKSTATTBERICHTE - BAND 47

Wissenschaftliches Zentrum
für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung
der Universität Gesamthochschule Kassel

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The present report has been prepared in the context of the monitoring and evaluation of the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS). It is designed primarily for use within the services of the European Commission, and although the report is being placed at the disposal of the general public, it is emphasized that the views which it contains are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the offical position of the Commission.

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Preface

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which provides a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements and transferring them from one institution to another, was established under the ERASMUS programme in 1987. It was tested and developed in a pilot scheme involving 145 higher education institutions in all EC Member States and EFTA countries in five subject areas: Business Administration, Chemistry, History, Mechanical Engineering and Medicine. The pilot project runs until 1994 95.

The European Community promotes study abroad as a means of improving the quality of academic cooperation and introducing a European dimension in studies at all levels. Studying abroad can be a particularly valuable experience as it is not only an ideal way to learn about other countries, ideas, languages and cultures, but it is also an important element in academic and professional career development. In order to enhance student mobility, the European Credit Transfer System was developed to provide a code of good practice for organising recognition of such study by increasing the understanding of the various study programmes in Europe and the nature of the students' achievements.

The ECTS scheme is now moving from its restricted pilot stage towards a much wider use in European higher education. The mid-term external evaluation of ECTS demonstrated the potential of the system and paved the way for its inclusion in the new SOCRATES programme under Chapter I, higher education, as an element of the European dimension. During the last phase of the pilot programme, the Commission has asked the participating universities to submit plans for the gradual extension of the ECTS beyond their pilot scheme activities to other disciplines within their own institution, or to their direct partners, particularly Interuniversity Cooperation Programmes (ICPs). The process of this gradual extension will facilitate further use of the system in the framework of SOCRATES.

External evaluation on ECTS proved that the system provides an instrument to create curricular transparency, to build bridges between institutions and to widen choices available for students. The system makes it easier for institutions to recognise the learning achievements of students through the use of commonly understood measurements - credits and grades - and it also provides a means to interpret national systems of credit allocation. The ECTS is based on three core elements: information on study programmes and student achievement; mutual agreement between the partner institutions and the student; and the use of credits to indicate student workload.

1

Objectives and Methods of the Survey

1.1 Context and Rationale of the ECTS Scheme

Student mobility is high on the agenda of higher education policies in most industrial societies. Student mobility is expected to contribute to the process of European integration by improving mutual understanding as well training a new generation of highly qualified persons for whom expertise and activity in more than one country has become a matter of course. Since student mobility is expected to grow beyond the currently small group of students who are highly motivated and able to pursue their goals even under unfavourable conditions, it has become desirable and necessary to set up systems which systematically reduce barriers to student mobility. For example, the additional costs involved in studying abroad might be redressed by the provision of scholarships, language barriers might be overcome by provisions and incentives for language training and by a move towards the development of courses taught in widely known languages; administrative barriers might be reduced, curricula might be co-ordinated and formal procedures might be introduced to encourage recognition of study periods abroad - all of these aimed at easing student mobility.

The barriers to increased mobility are manifold and diverse and may not be easily overcome by the various measures which could be undertaken. In addition, it might not always be desirable to revamp higher education systems in ways which make mobility easier: for example, there are variations between higher education systems in terms of theories, content of knowledge, teaching and learning styles or examinations modes which are generally assumed to be valid and to reflect the cultural traditions of individual countries. Therefore policies in favour of easing mobility have to have moderate short-term aims and with priorities set from the outset. When the European Communities inaugurated an Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) in 1987, an ambitious long-

term objective was set out according to which 10 percent of the students at higher education institutions in Europe should spend a period of study in another EC Member State. Moderate aims and priorities were set, aimed at making an initial break-through in the face of the manifold barriers against mobility. The main characteristics of the programme are set out below.

- The ERASMUS programme predominantly promotes short-term mobility. As a rule, students are expected to spend a term, a semester or an academic year abroad and to return afterwards to their home institution. This, of course, keeps costs low and reduces the academic risks for students involved, compared with those involved in long-term study abroad or frequently crossing boundaries.
- Mobility is promoted between a small number of departments, each willing to co-operate regularly and continuously in student exchange. In contrast to individual mobility of students to any department of his or her choice, mobility between regularly co-operating departments might be expected to ensure improved conditions in many respects. Mutual knowledge of study conditions and provisions might lead to a certain degree of curricular co-ordination and to the acceptance of the validity of existing curricular differences by the academic staff involved which would help to increase the quality of provision for learning abroad and the likelihood of achievements abroad being recognised. Based on continuous experiences and committed to long-term co-operation, the co-operating departments might establish measures of academic and administrative support for mobile students which could not be expected to be realised by all departments of all institutions of higher education to the same extent.
- The official conditions for being awarded ERASMUS support are not extensive. Participating departments have to provide evidence only that they have taken measures aimed at ensuring that students' achievements abroad will be recognised upon return. The selection of participating students is not regulated at all by the ERASMUS programme, except for general principles of eligibility. This allows participating departments to get involved in promoting student mobility without being required, from the outset, to undertake substantial changes in their own courses to favour student mobility, and this allows the ERASMUS programme to support a wide range of academic and administrative means in favour of increased students mobility in a flexible way.

Adhering in principle to a policy of stimulating diverse solutions does not preclude, however, the search for a limited range of more ambitious solutions which might serve as models of good practice for others. Within the ERASMUS programme, the search for high-quality solutions takes various forms. For example, award decisions are based on views on desirable academic and administrative arrangements for student mobility, with information on award criteria and decisions

playing a role in setting standards. Publications such as guides on how to establish ERASMUS programmes serve to disseminate knowledge on successful practice in the past.

A further step aimed at exploring methods of improving practice was undertaken in 1989 when a considerable proportion of the ERASMUS funds was reserved for a pilot scheme set up to examine the potential of introducing a few more demanding conditions into study abroad programmes. The European Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS), inaugurated in 1989, sets more ambitious conditions for student mobility in two respects.

(a) Certain formal procedures for the calculation of students' achievements and for information on their achievements should be introduced. The underlying assumption is that the level of academic recognition will be higher - other factors apart - if there are common ways of defining units of learning and achievement and if there are common ways of quantifying and accrediting academic achievements. Participating departments are expected to assign credits to courses in terms of 60 credits per year, to furnish transcripts on courses taken and credits awarded when an individual student is to move to another institution, and to provide information about their course programmes and individual courses in such a way that potential participants can prepare thoroughly for their study period abroad.

(b) Recognition of achievements abroad ought to be ensured for a wider range than the standard one in the ERASMUS ICP programme. Most commonly in ICPs, the recognition of achievements acquired during a study period of up to one year abroad is awarded by the "home" department, i.e. the department which as a rule had admitted the student, has shaped his or her knowledge already prior to the study period, and is in the position to assess study on familiar programmes at a small number of partner institutions as one of various components of the complete process of learning it will eventually certify. The ECTS scheme aims to extend the range of recognition in two respects. First, the network of co-operating departments is wider with initially about 15 departments in each field of study co-operating in the pilot scheme from the outset, and with a further extension taking place in 1990/91 (about 25 departments in each field). Secondly, award of academic recognition (by means of credit transfer) is supposed to be granted for any mode of students' mobility: this includes moves from one participating department to the other, the aim being the award of a degree by the latter institution or more complex moves, for example a move to a third participating institution upon the completion of the study period supported by an ERASMUS grant.

A number of measures have been taken to ensure a thorough exploration of these ambitious goals. First, preferential treatment has been ensured as far as resources are concerned. Departments participating in the ECTS pilot scheme receive a larger amount of institutional support and face no risk of discontinuity of mid-term support compared with departments participating in Inter-University

Co-operation Programmes (ICPs). Secondly, due to the Commission's efforts in ensuring feedback of experience, ECTS programmes are awarded, on average, more indirect support than ICPs. Thirdly, the achievements and problems of the students and departments involved in the ECTS scheme are more closely monitored than those involved in ICPs.

1.2 Evaluation of the ERASMUS Programme and the ECTS Student Survey

Systematic gathering of information is an important element in developing and improving student mobility arrangements. DGXXII (formerly the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth) of the European Commission, therefore, places strong emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of the ERASMUS programme in a way which might be helpful for the European, national, and regional authorities, for the institutions of higher education involved and for the participating students making use of the ERASMUS programme, in ensuring its continuity and in initiating and implementing improvements. Monitoring and evaluation takes various forms: meetings of participants and experts, studies on specific aspects to occasional comprehensive assessment of the whole programme, etc. In order to ensure a systematic and continuous way of information gathering, the Task Force entrusted a research team headed by Ulrich Teichler at the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work of the Comprehensive University of Kassel with the task of regularly establishing basic statistics, surveying participating students, analysing reports provided by academic staff, administrative staff, and students involved, and supplementing this evaluation programme by other relevant studies, for example graduate surveys or surveys of mobile teaching staff. In the framework of this programme, three surveys "Experiences of ECTS Students" have been undertaken targeting the students who have taken part in the first three years of the ECTS scheme.

The structure of the surveys of ECTS students were based on a series of surveys conducted in the mid-eighties of students going abroad for a period in the framework of various support programmes; these surveys included the "Joint Study Programmes", i.e. the predecessor pilot programme of the ERASMUS programme (see S. Opper, U. Teichler and J. Carlson. *The Impact of Study Abroad Programmes on Students and Graduates*. London: J. Kingsley, 1990) and those surveys of ERASMUS students in 1988/89 and 1990/91 who were mobile within the framework of Inter-University Co-operation Programmes or as "free movers" (about 5%) (see F. Maiworm, W. Steube and U. Teichler. *Learning in Europe: The ERASMUS Experience*. London: J. Kingsley, 1991; F. Maiworm, W. Steube and U. Teichler. *Experiences of ERASMUS Students 1990/91*. Kassel: Wissen-

schaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung der Gesamthochschule Kassel, 1993).

1.3 Research Design, Methods, and Procedures

This study is based on three questionnaire surveys covering the experiences of ECTS students of the study years 1989/90, 1990/91 and 1991/92. Experiences acquired in previous surveys and meetings with ECTS students, as well as experts from the European Commission, the ERASMUS Bureau, persons involved in the ECTS network, and other experts helped in setting thematic priorities and in formulating the questionnaire. Students were asked to provide information regarding:

- their biography and educational career;
- the pattern of the ERASMUS supported period;
- preparation for the study abroad period;
- advice and support provided by the home and the host institutions of higher education;
- living in the host country;
- studying at the host institution of higher education;
- accommodation;
- financial resources and expenses;
- foreign language proficiency before and after the study period abroad;
- knowledge of and opinion about the host country culture and society;
- procedures related to crediting and credit transfer;
- academic achievements and transfer of credits; and
- summarising assessment of the life and study period in the host country.

Each of the questionnaires comprised between 24 and 28 pages, more than 80 questions, and about 800 variables. Most of the questions were closed, though leaving room for statements, for example in a final open category, "others". At the end of the questionnaires, students were asked to describe their worst and best experiences as well as difficulties successfully overcome. The questionnaires were translated into the nine official EC languages. Students in Belgium were furnished a questionnaire in either in French or in Dutch depending on the language of instruction at their home institution of higher education.

Programme administrators at the individual universities were asked by the ERASMUS Bureau in summer 1990, 1991 and 1992 to provide addresses of the students taking part in the ECTS programme. This resulted in addresses of only about 60 percent of the participating students in the first year of ECTS, 80 percent in the second year and an almost complete set of addresses in the third year (99 percent). If only the names but no addresses were made available, the questionnaires were mailed to the respective home institutions of higher education of the students. The front page of the questionnaires comprised a short address by the

Table 1.1
Representation of ECTS-Students in the Surveys, by Country of Home Institution of Higher Education and Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

Country of home institution	1989/90				1990/91				1991/92			
	All ECTS students		Participants in ECTS survey		All ECTS students		Participants in ECTS survey		All ECTS students		Participants in ECTS survey	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
B	33	6.0	24	7.1	47	6.2	24	6.1	50	5.7	27	4.6
D	106	19.2	70	20.6	131	17.3	86	21.8	178	20.2	129	22.2
DK	23	4.2	13	3.8	31	4.1	15	3.8	34	3.9	23	4.0
E	84	15.2	56	16.5	134	17.7	64	16.2	178	20.2	111	19.1
F	105	19.0	47	13.9	138	18.2	75	19.0	154	17.4	96	16.5
GR	30	5.4	18	5.3	52	6.9	23	5.8	51	5.8	30	5.2
I	47	8.5	33	9.7	64	8.5	38	9.6	58	6.6	47	8.1
IRL	24	4.3	12	3.5	30	4.0	17	4.3	27	3.1	21	3.6
L	-	-	-	-	2	0.3	2	0.5	-	-	-	-
NL	39	7.1	21	6.2	49	6.5	21	5.3	58	6.6	40	6.9
P	25	4.5	15	4.4	16	2.1	6	1.5	24	2.7	18	3.1
UK	37	6.7	30	8.8	63	8.3	23	5.8	71	8.0	39	6.7
Total	553	100.0	339	100.0	757	100.0	394	100.0	883	100.0	581	100.0

head of the research project, explaining the intentions of the survey and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality as well as clarification of major terms used (e.g. the term "university" refers to all institutions recognised as institutions of higher education in the respective EC Member States). A return envelope and postage stamps were provided.

The questionnaires were mailed in spring 1991, 1992 and 1993, i.e. at the time when all students had not only completed the study period in the host country, but also had experienced life and study at the home institution again, and in most cases knew the outcome of the credit transfer process. All students not responding within six weeks were sent a reminder letter.

Altogether, about two-thirds of students from each ECTS cohort for whom valid addresses had been made available responded to the questionnaires within 20 weeks. The response rate of the 1991/92 ECTS students to the questionnaire was somewhat lower (61 percent) than for the other years but, by and large, the response rates indicates the students' extraordinarily high willingness to support an evaluation of this student mobility programme by providing feedback regarding their experience.

A comparison of the profile of the respondents to the questionnaire with the students participating in the ECTS programme (see Table 1.1) shows

- in 1989/90: an under-representation of French students among the respondents, a balanced representation according to host country, and finally an over-representation of business administration;
- in 1990/91: a slight under-representation of British students among the respondents and an over-representation of German students. The representation according to host country was balanced, while students in history were over-represented and students of business administration were under-represented;
- in 1991/92: no significant differences regarding country of home institution, host country and field of study. Therefore we can assume that the respondents to the questionnaire represent the total population of ECTS students 1991/92 very well.

The over-representation and under-representation according to standard statistical criteria were very low in most cases and should not lead to a substantial bias of major findings.

This report is based on the experiences of three cohorts of ECTS students with the expectation that specific problems faced by the first cohort of ECTS students due to the speedy implementation of the ECTS programme in 1988/89 would be solved in the subsequent years (cf. the earlier publication on the first cohort: F. Maiworm, W. Steube and U. Teichler: *ECTS in its Year of Inauguration: The View of the Students*, Werkstattberichte, 37, Kassel 1992; in French: *ECTS dans l'Année de son Lancement: Le Regard des Etudiants*, Werkstattberichte, 39, Kas-

sel 1992). A comparison of the experiences of ECTS students 1991/92 with those participating in the first two years of the ECTS scheme allow us to examine whether the formal procedures of credit transfer have improved and whether we note a first sign of a general development towards further increase of the quality of the programme.

The description of these research findings starts with the latest actual information available, i.e. from the survey of ECTS students in 1991/92. In a second step, the responses of ECTS students in 1991/92 will be compared with those of ECTS students of previous years and, in some areas, with those of ICP students. These comparisons are only undertaken in generalised terms for the whole cohorts of students and not for all possible sub-groups, i.e. students from specific fields of studies, home countries or host countries. Analyses of sub-groups of students presented in this report are confined to ECTS students in 1991/92.

This study was conducted at the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work of the Comprehensive University of Kassel (Federal Republic of Germany), by Friedhelm Maiworm and Ulrich Teichler. Word processing was undertaken by Kristin Gagelmann and Paul Greim. The proof-reading of the text was done by Irene Magill. The study was eased by substantial support from the ERASMUS Bureau. Formal checks of the responses and the coding of open questions were performed by Skarlatos Antoniadis, Angela Antona, Bernhard Krede, Klaus Klein, Isabelle Le Mouillour and Sabine Stange. Last but not least, the ECTS students who each spent more than one hour in completing the questionnaire were the key persons in ensuring a set of comprehensive and interesting findings.

The data processing and statistical analysis was undertaken with the help of the central computer of the Comprehensive University of Kassel and of IBM personal computers of the Centre. Programme packages SPSS5.0 served the statistical analysis and the provision of tables.

2

The Participating Students

2.1 Basic Profile Data

ECTS students were asked to provide basic information which served both to describe the structure of the programmes and the characteristics of the participating students. Data items collected about the programme structure were country of home institution of higher education and country of host institution, field of study,. and duration of the study period abroad: data on age, period of prior study, nationality, sex, parents' educational background, prior stays abroad, changes of field of study, and family status were also collected to provide student profiles for participating students. In addition, students were asked to state their motives for studying abroad in general, as well as the reasons for selecting their particular host institution in preference to other institutions within the ECTS scheme. All data presented in this chapter are used in describing the characteristics of the students who reported their experiences regarding studying abroad in the framework of ECTS. Regarding home country, host country and field of study of ECTS students, we are able to provide complete figures of all ECTS students gathered from so called "technical data sheets" provided by the participating institutions. As already mentioned in chapter 1, the respondents to the questionnaires do not differ very much from the total population of ECTS students.

For convenience sake, we talk of "British", "French", "Spanish" students etc. in the subsequent text if we refer to the country of the home institution of higher education; we do so because all major issues of this study refer to co-operation between partner institutions of higher education from the respective countries. It should be mentioned in this context, that between three and five percent of the students participating in ECTS in the first three years were "foreigners", i.e. not citizens of the country of the home institution of higher education.

The number of students participating in ECTS increased from 553 in the first year to 753 in the second year and 883 in the third year of the ECTS scheme. In each year about half of the students were from three countries: Germany, France and Spain. The proportion of German students was slightly above 20 percent and the proportion of French students about 18 percent in the first three years of ECTS. Spanish students were represented with about 16 percent in the first two years and 20 percent in the third year of ECTS. Only Denmark, Ireland, Portugal and Luxembourg were continually represented by less than 5 percent of the ECTS students.

Table 2.1
Number of Students Participating in ECTS, by Host Country and Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

	1989/90		1990/91		1991/92	
Host country	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
B	34	6.2	41	5.4	53	6.0
D	66	11.9	83	11.0	88	10.0
DK	11	2.0	16	2.1	20	2.3
E	61	11.0	85	11.3	110	12.5
F	103	18.6	161	21.4	175	19.8
GR	10	1.8	20	2.7	17	1.9
I	36	6.5	54	7.2	82	9.3
IRL	28	5.1	60	8.0	51	5.8
L	1	0.2	-	-	-	-
NL	13	2.4	18	2.4	25	2.8
P	9	1.6	21	2.8	15	1.7
UK	181	32.7	194	25.8	247	28.0
Total	553	100.0	753	100.0	883	100.0

Question 2.5: Please state: Home institution/host institution/institution you are enrolled in now/institution where you want to obtain the degree/qualification towards which you are currently studying:

Although the proportion of British students participating in ECTS was only about 8 percent on average, the United Kingdom played the most important role as ECTS host country (see Table 2.1). The proportion of ECTS students who spent

their study period abroad in the United Kingdom was one third in 1989/90, 26 percent in 1990/91 and 28 percent in 1991/92. Another important ECTS host country was France which hosted about 20 percent of the ECTS students each year. Germany and Spain, two of the major sending countries hosted about 10 percent each and clearly received fewer ECTS students than they sent abroad. Limitations in language proficiencies of students might be one of the reasons for the low number of students who went to Denmark, Greece, Portugal and the Netherlands.

The ECTS pilot scheme comprises five fields of study: business administration, history, chemistry, medicine, and mechanical engineering. As Table 2.2 shows, the proportion of students enrolled in each field did not vary much in the first three years of ECTS. About one-third of the respondents were enrolled in business administration, a quarter in medicine, about one-fifth in mechanical engineering, and about a seventh each in chemistry and history.

Table 2.2
Number of Students Participating in ECTS, by Subject Area and Academic Year (absolute numbers and percentages)

	1989/90		1990/91		1991/92	
Subject area	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business	170	30.7	219	29.1	267	30.2
History	88	15.9	105	13.9	105	11.9
Medicine	118	21.3	187	24.8	229	25.9
Chemistry	81	14.6	106	14.1	130	14.7
Mechanical engineering	96	17.4	136	18.1	152	17.2
Total	553	100.0	753	100.0	883	100.0

Question 2.2: Please state your major field of study.

The average duration of the study period abroad for those ECTS students surveyed was 8.2 months in 1989/90, 8.9 months 1990/91 and 8.3 months 1991/92. In general, ECTS students spent about 1.5 months more in their host country(ies) than did ERASMUS students in equivalent years. As Table 2.3 shows, only 6 percent of the 1991/92 cohort of ECTS students spent three months abroad, while 29 percent spent 4-6 months and 64 percent more than six months abroad. On average, Dutch students (6.2 months) and Irish students (6.4 months) spent the shortest

periods abroad: periods longer than average were reported by Portuguese (9.8 months), Spanish (9.7 months), British (9.2 months), Danish (8.9 months) and German (8.6 months) students. Students of business administration (7.2 months) went on average for one month less abroad than students of the remaining subjects. This figures are similar to those of ECTS students of the preceding years.

Table 2.3
Duration of ECTS Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution
(percent)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
3 months or less	7	2	4	0	8	7	7	20	10	17	14	6
4-6 months	44	24	26	7	38	57	47	40	63	0	14	29
7-12 months	48	73	61	89	52	37	42	35	28	72	59	61
13 months and more	0	2	9	4	2	0	4	5	0	11	14	3
Average length of study period abroad	7.1	8.6	8.9	9.7	7.6	6.9	7.9	6.4	6.2	9.8	9.2	8.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(27)	(129)	(23)	(111)	(96)	(30)	(45)	(20)	(40)	(18)	(37)	(576)

Question 2.4: Please state the duration of the ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad (including work placement and holiday periods).

Prior periods of study abroad within the framework of ECTS were stated by 8 percent of the 1991/92 respondents. Of these, two percent of them stated that they had already spent a period abroad through ECTS in 1989/90, the year of inauguration of the ECTS programme, with the remaining 6 percent in 1990/91. Among the respondents of the ECTS survey 1991/92 were two students who had studied abroad in all the three ECTS academic years from 1989/90 to 1991/92.

Altogether 86 percent of the ECTS students surveyed in 1991/92 stated lectures and seminars as their major activity during the period abroad. In about half of these cases additional activities like work placement, laboratory work or work on thesis were mentioned. As Table 2.4 shows, solely taking lectures and seminars were most often stated by students in business administration (77 %) whereas the respective proportions were very small in chemistry (11 %) and medicine (16 %). In medicine a combination of lectures, seminars and work placement were most common (51 %) and in chemistry the combination of lectures, seminars and labo-

ratory work. Students in history stated more often that they worked on their thesis (27 %) than students from other fields.

Table 2.4
Major Activities During the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study
(percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Lectures	77	58	11	16	57	44
Lectures and work placement	9	3	11	51	3	18
Lectures and laboratory work	1	1	45	1	14	11
Lectures, work placement and laboratory work	0	0	12	0	3	2
Lectures and other activities	11	32	0	7	13	11
Work placement	1	0	7	21	4	8
Laboratory work	0	0	13	1	5	3
Other	1	6	2	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(154)	(71)	(95)	(148)	(110)	(578)

Question 2.17: What were your major activities during the ECTS period 1991/92 abroad?

2.2 Select Biographical Information

More than half of the ECTS students were between 21 and 23 years old at the time they went abroad within the ECTS scheme. The average age reported varied between 23.0 years in the first year of ECTS and 23.5 years in the third year. Only about 10 percent of the students were on average older than 25 years. Female ECTS students were about half a year younger on average than their male counterparts. Irish and British students were the youngest (20-22 years), while Danish and German (24-25 years) students were the oldest on average.

Table 2.5
Study Period in Major Field of Study Prior to Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent)

	Country of home institution											Total
Years of prior study	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Beginner	4	1	0	3	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	1
< 1	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	8	2
1 - 1.9	12	7	4	2	20	0	0	30	8	0	39	10
2 - 2.9	15	32	35	10	30	37	11	50	35	0	37	26
3 - 3.9	54	38	39	28	30	13	43	15	35	17	5	31
4 - 4.9	0	16	9	31	13	20	15	5	15	72	3	18
5 - 5.9	12	5	13	16	1	23	15	0	5	0	5	8
6 - 6.9	4	1	0	8	2	3	13	0	3	11	3	4
7 and more	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(26)	(129)	(23)	(109)	(96)	(30)	(46)	(20)	(40)	(18)	(38)	(575)

Question 2.1: How long was the period of study you had completed in your major field of study prior to your ECTS period 1991/92 abroad? (in years and months; e.g. tick 2 years and 6 months, if you spent the second half of your third year abroad)

The differences in the age at the time of the study abroad period by country of home institution reflect to some extent - in addition to the age at the time of the first enrolment - the timing of the study abroad period in the overall course of study. More than half of the students of each ECTS cohort surveyed went abroad in the third and fourth year of study; about 20 percent went in their fifth year of study and about 10 percent in their second year. For British and Irish students, it was more common to go abroad at an earlier stage, while for Spanish, Greek, Italian and Portuguese students it was not unusual to go abroad during the fifth year of study or even later (see Table 2.5). This, of course, reflects the differing lengths of courses within higher education institutions in the Member States of the European Union.

The timing of the study abroad period differed by field of study, as Table 2.6 indicates. Students enrolled in business administration and history went abroad at a relatively early stage in their course of study - about half during the third year or earlier. On the other hand, study periods at relatively late stages were reported by students in medicine.

Table 2.6
Study Period in Major Field of Study Prior to Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)

Years	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Beginner	3	0	0	1	2	1
< 1	3	0	1	1	1	2
1 - 1.9	17	12	10	4	7	10
2 - 2.9	30	48	33	13	15	26
3 - 3.9	30	23	28	29	42	31
4 - 4.9	13	9	24	23	18	18
5 - 5.9	4	6	3	19	7	8
6 - 6.9	1	3	0	8	7	4
7 and more	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(155)	(69)	(96)	(145)	(110)	(575)

Question 2.1: How long was the period of study you had completed in your major field of study prior to your ECTS period 1991/92 abroad? (in years and months; e.g. tick 2 years and 6 months, if you spent the second half of your third year abroad)

The proportion of male students within ECTS was about 10 percent higher than the proportion of male students within ICPs (56 % on average of the first three years). This higher ratio might be due to the characteristics of the fields of study included in the ECTS programme (business administration, history, medicine, chemistry, and mechanical engineering) since male students clearly dominated in mechanical engineering; they also comprised about half (or somewhat less than half) in business administration, medicine and chemistry and history. Those fields predominantly chosen by female students - such as foreign languages or teacher training - are not included in the ECTS pilot scheme.

Each sixth of the ECTS students reported that both parents were graduates from institutions of higher education, and in a further quarter of the cases, only the fathers or - in a few exceptional cases (about 3 %) - only the mothers were graduates. The percentage of ECTS students with higher education-trained parents (either both or one of them) varied substantially according to home country but with changing patterns over time. On the other hand, ECTS students enrolled in

medicine in all three years surveyed often reported that one or both of their parents had completed a degree, compared with students enrolled in other fields.

Almost all students surveyed had spent some period abroad since they were 15 years old prior to their ECTS study period, with half of those spending some period in their ECTS host country. The average total duration of such visits abroad was about 7 months (for all respondents); visits to the host country averaged about 2 months. Although most ECTS students spent on average less than one month abroad each year, usually on holidays, prior to their ECTS period, these previous cross-cultural experiences may have led to the acquiring of some basic skills of coping with life and study in other countries.

2.3 Motives

Students were asked to state which motives influenced their decision to study abroad. They were presented with a list of 13 reasons and asked to rate them on a scale from 1 = "strong influence" to 5 = "no influence at all". The responses of three cohorts of ECTS students and ICP students 1990/91 show similar patterns regarding the importance of single motives. The responses of 1991/92 ECTS students to the individual aspects are documented in Table 2.7. Reasons such as learning a foreign language (88 %), self-development (86 %), improvement of career prospects (75 %), desire to gain academic learning in another country (73 %), and the desire to enhance understanding of the host country (67 %) played the most important role in the decision to study abroad. Only a few students stated reasons such as better examination results (9 %) or the fact that friends were going abroad (8 %) as important.

Looking at the differences in rating given to academic matters across the 5 disciplines, this area was recognised as most important by business administration students (82%) and least important by medical students (62%). The range of responses given to the importance of foreign language learning was less wide: it was viewed as most important by mechanical engineering students (95%) and least important by medical students (82%).

Improvement of career prospects were mentioned most often by students of business administration (89 %) as an important reason for the decision to study abroad. Also improvement of career aspects played an important role for students enrolled in other fields: about three quarters of students in chemistry (77 %) and mechanical engineering (73 %) and about two-thirds in medicine (66 %) and history (62 %) stated this reason as an important one. Opportunity for self-development was stated most often by students of business studies (93 %) and history (92 %) and least often by students of mechanical engineering (80 %).

Table 2.7
Motives for Studying Abroad in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent*)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Subject matters not offered at the home institution	21	36	26	20	17	23
Expectation of better marks	13	10	6	8	5	9
New teaching methods	59	52	47	61	46	54
Academic learning experience abroad	82	78	74	62	69	73
Improvement of career prospects	89	62	77	66	73	75
Foreign language learning	90	87	85	82	95	88
Desire to travel	54	59	56	55	53	55
Joining friends	8	4	10	8	8	8
Getting a new perspective of the home country	46	61	35	60	47	50
Enhance understanding of the host country	75	77	57	69	56	67
Break from usual surroundings	58	65	58	66	64	62
Self-development	92	93	83	83	80	86
Did not think much about it	3	0	2	3	3	3

Question 1.6: Which of the following reasons influenced your decision to study abroad?

* Percent responding "1" or "2" on a scale from 1 = "strong influence" to 5 = "no influence at all"

To become acquainted with subject matters not offered at the home institution or new teaching methods were more important for the decision to study abroad for students from the Mediterranean countries than for students from the northern EC countries. In this regard we do not note any significant differences between ECTS 1991/92 students and ECTS and ICP students of the preceding years.

2.4 Information about Study Abroad Possibilities

ECTS students 1990/91 and 1991/92 were asked to state the ways they were informed about the possibility to study abroad within the ERASMUS programme. Accordingly, the most important source of information were academic staff members in 1990/91 (59% as compared to 50% in 1991/92) and other students in 1991/92 (58% as compared to 44% in 1990/91); these findings emphasise the growing reputation the ECTS programme has among the students now that the programme is in its third year.

Many students, however, reported more than one source of information. In addition, students got to know about the possibility of studying abroad in the framework of the ERASMUS programme notably through:

- posters, notices at the home institution (54 % in 1991/92 and 41% in 1990/91);
- ERASMUS programme information material (40 % and 48%);
- administrative staff members (15 % and 16%); and
- information from newspapers, radio, television, etc. (5 % and 7%).

Official information material on the programme was used far more frequently by ECTS students than their ERASMUS counterparts; also a higher proportion of ECTS students reported that they were informed through posters and other visual media at the home institution.

The different types of information methods used varied by field of study. As Table 2.8 shows, the proportion of ECTS students 1991/92 informed by academic staff ranged from 37 percent in medicine to 68 percent in chemistry. Information by other students were most often mentioned in medicine (66 %) and business administration (63 %), while the respective proportions were clearly less in history (44 %) and chemistry (46 %). Visual information at the home institution was least often stated by chemistry students (47 %) and most often by students of mechanical engineering (60 %). This figures are similar to those found for ECTS students of the previous year.

The importance of academic staff as a source of information about the ECTS programme varied substantially by home country. Even in 1990/91 to 1991/92, three-quarters of the students from Ireland and the United Kingdom were informed about the ECTS possibilities by their academic staff. The respective proportion was considerable lower in the case of Dutch students (about one third).

Table 2.8
Knowledge About Possibility to Study Abroad in 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Media	4	1	4	11	5	0	13	0	3	0	5	5
Posters, notices	56	61	57	56	49	50	60	43	60	67	28	54
Information material	48	36	43	51	21	50	40	43	57	39	26	40
Academic staff members	48	44	35	49	53	47	62	76	28	56	72	50
Administrative staff members	19	9	17	7	33	23	4	14	5	6	26	15
Other students	52	58	74	66	53	73	55	52	65	78	21	58
Other	7	10	17	4	2	3	4	0	5	6	3	6
Not ticked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	3	0
Total	233	220	248	243	217	247	238	233	223	250	182	228
(n)	(27)	(129)	(23)	(111)	(96)	(30)	(47)	(21)	(40)	(18)	(39)	(581)

Question 2.18: How did you get to know about the possibility to study abroad within the ECTS programme?

2.5 Application and Award

The second and the third cohort of ECTS students were asked about their experiences regarding the timing of application and award of an ERASMUS grant. Because the comparison of the responses of both cohorts does not show any significant differences, the following chapter is based only on the latest available information i.e. the experiences of ECTS students studying abroad in 1991/92.

Those ECTS students eventually awarded an ERASMUS grant had applied for it, on average, 7.4 months prior to the study period abroad. Only 2 percent applied at most two months prior to the sojourn, and 6 percent 3-4 months before they went abroad. 88 percent of the students applied 5-9 months before. Few applications were submitted more than nine months prior to the study period (3 %).

Table 2.9
Timing of Application for ECTS Support 1991/92 as Compared to the Departure, by Country of Home Institution (percent and mean)

Months prior to departure	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
< 1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-2 months	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	15	12	3	2
3-4 months	4	3	5	5	10	4	2	10	18	6	5	6
5-6 months	48	26	45	52	31	32	64	38	18	59	43	39
7-12 months	44	68	50	42	56	57	30	48	44	24	32	49
13 months and more	0	3	0	0	2	7	2	5	5	0	16	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(27)	(125)	(20)	(109)	(93)	(28)	(47)	(21)	(39)	(17)	(37)	(563)
Average	6.6	8.0	7.4	6.7	7.9	8.5	6.6	8.1	6.9	5.5	8.3	7.4

Question 2.6: When did you apply for an ECTS-supported period 1991/92 abroad?

As Table 2.9 shows, the proportion of students applying at least half a year before their departure varied from 24 percent in Portugal to 71 percent in Germany. The average time of application varied from 5.5 months (Portugal) to 8.5 months prior to departure (Greece). Only a small variation in the timing of application could be observed by field of study.

Students were informed on average 4.4 months prior to departure that they were accepted for study abroad. Only 13 percent were informed more than six months in advance; most students were informed between three and four months prior (44 %), and 16 percent only within the last two month before departure.

Late information, i.e. within the last two months prior to departure, was most often experienced by students of mechanical engineering (27 %) and chemistry (20 %). On average, students in mechanical engineering were notified latest of all about their acceptance for the ECTS study period (3.6 months) though this could be explained to some extent by the relatively late timing of their applications (6.5 months prior as compared to 7.4 months on average of all ECTS students). Earliest notification about acceptance was reported by students of business administration (4.8 months prior to the departure). The timing of acceptance varied to a smaller extent according to the host country than according to the home country. As regards home country, latest notification of acceptance was reported by Portuguese students (3.3 months) while Irish (5.8 months), Greek and British students (5.2 months each) were notified earliest (see Table 2.10).

Table 2.10
Timing of Notification About the Acceptance for the ECTS Period 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent and mean)

Months prior to departure	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
< 1	4	1	5	1	0	3	2	0	3	0	0	1
1-2 months	11	11	9	10	19	7	19	10	26	44	16	15
3-4 months	44	49	64	53	44	33	43	25	28	28	37	44
5-6 months	26	32	14	32	22	30	26	30	21	22	29	27
7-12 months	15	8	9	5	15	27	11	35	21	6	13	12
13 months and more	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	5	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(27)	(123)	(22)	(111)	(95)	(30)	(47)	(20)	(39)	(18)	(38)	(570)
Average	4.0	4.3	3.9	4.1	4.3	5.2	4.1	5.8	4.7	3.3	5.2	4.4

Question 2.7: When were you notified that you had been accepted for your study period 1991/92 abroad?

All Danish, Greek, Irish, Dutch, Portuguese and British students reported that they received an ERASMUS grant. The proportion of respondents from the remaining countries who received an ERASMUS grant ranged from 80 percent in the case of Spain to 91 percent in the case of Italy.

On average, ECTS students were informed about 3.1 months prior to departure that they would receive an ERASMUS grant. The time span between application and award lasted on average about four months.

Among those 76 percent informed more than 2 weeks prior to departure, 12 percent were informed 1-2 months prior and about one-third each were informed 3-4 months prior, and finally 5 and more months prior to departure to the host country. A relatively high proportion of students did not know even as late as one month before departure whether they had been awarded an ERASMUS grant:

- 12 percent were informed within two weeks before and after the departure;
- 7 percent were informed about the award at a later stage during the study period abroad; and
- 2 percent were informed only after their return to the host institution.

As Table 2.11 shows, very late information, not earlier than two weeks prior to departure, was most often reported by German students (45 %). On the other hand, late information was rare for Italian (none) and Belgian students (8 %). Re-

garding field of study very late information was frequently stated by students of mechanical engineering (29 %) but was an exception for students of history (4 %).

ECTS students received information on the amount of the award on average about three weeks before the departure with 47 percent informed prior to the departure, 22 percent at the time of departure and 31 percent after the departure to the host country. Altogether, there was, on average, a time lag of about 2 1/2 months between the notification of the ERASMUS grant and the information about the amount granted.

Table 2.11
Timing of Notification of Receipt of ERASMUS Grant 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent and mean)

	Country of home institution											Total
Months prior to/ after departure	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
7 and more months prior	8	8	0	2	17	30	19	43	18	11	15	13
5-6 months prior	29	17	4	26	17	30	43	33	18	11	18	22
3-4 months prior	38	19	43	43	34	20	31	10	23	33	21	29
1-2 months prior	8	10	35	6	10	10	5	5	20	28	23	12
Prior, without detailed information	8	1	0	0	4	0	2	0	3	0	3	2
About the time of departure	8	13	17	14	14	3	0	5	20	6	13	12
1-2 months after	0	5	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	2
3-4 months after	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	3
5-6 months after	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	6	0	1
7 and more months after	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
After, without detailed information	0	15	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	6	0	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(24)	(110)	(23)	(86)	(83)	(30)	(42)	(21)	(40)	(18)	(39)	(516)
Average (months prior to departure)	4.1	0.4	2.3	2.8	3.9	4.8	5.3	6.1	3.7	2.2	3.6	3.1

Question 2.9: When were you notified that you would receive an ERASMUS ECTS Student Grant?

In the majority of all EC member states, about half (or slightly less than half) of the students were informed late, i.e. not earlier than two weeks prior to departure, about the amount of grant awarded. Only Dutch (30 %), Portuguese (34 %), Irish (34 %), and Danish students (38 %) were less likely to be informed at a late stage. Regarding the field of study the highest proportion of students informed at a late stage about the amount of ERASMUS grant was observed in mechanical engineering (62 %) and medicine (61 %). Students of history were informed earliest, as Table 2.12 shows.

Table 2.12
Timing of Information About the Amount of ERASMUS Grant 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent and mean)

Months prior to/ after departure	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
7 and more months prior	0	5	0	1	8	10	5	19	10	11	0	5
5-6 months prior	13	10	4	15	7	17	12	19	13	6	5	11
3-4 months prior	25	14	30	23	19	17	9	0	28	22	5	17
1-2 months prior	0	16	26	3	10	10	9	29	18	28	23	13
Prior, without detailed information	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	1
About the time of departure	25	17	30	16	24	20	16	29	30	0	38	22
1-2 months after	17	6	4	7	8	13	2	0	0	11	18	7
3-4 months after	4	6	4	17	10	7	12	5	0	0	10	9
5-6 months after	8	3	0	5	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	3
7 and more months after	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	1
After, without detailed information	8	19	0	10	10	0	33	0	0	17	0	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(24)	(108)	(23)	(86)	(83)	(30)	(43)	(21)	(40)	(18)	(39)	(515)
Average (months prior to (-) or after departure)	-0.3	0.6	-1.4	0.2	-1.1	-2.1	1.0	-3.4	-2.8	0.3	-0.3	-0.5

Question 2.10: When were you informed about the amount of your ERASMUS ECTS Student Grant?

Finally, students received the first payment of their ERASMUS grant on average two months after their departure to the host country. Only 9 percent received the first payment more than two weeks prior to departure. On the other hand, 13 percent received their ERASMUS grant only after returning to the home institution, as Table 2.13 shows.

Table 2.13
Timing of Receipt of the First Payment of ERASMUS Grant 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent and mean)

Months prior to/ after departure	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
7 and more months prior	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3-4 months prior	4	2	9	0	0	0	2	0	5	0	0	2
1-2 months prior	4	6	26	2	1	7	2	10	13	6	15	7
About the time of departure	25	31	52	8	18	55	14	76	68	44	38	31
1-2 months after	17	17	9	29	27	21	9	10	13	17	28	20
3-4 months after	8	14	4	37	32	14	28	5	3	11	18	20
5-6 months after	21	4	0	10	9	0	12	0	0	6	0	6
7 and more months after	0	4	0	0	0	3	5	0	0	6	0	2
After, without detailed information	21	23	0	13	13	0	28	0	0	11	0	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(24)	(111)	(23)	(86)	(82)	(29)	(43)	(21)	(40)	(18)	(39)	(516)
Average (months prior to (-) or after departure)	2.4	2.8	-.3	3.0	2.5	1.0	3.5	.2	-.1	2.7	.8	2.1

Question 2.11: When did you receive the first money?

Very late receipt of the first ERASMUS grant, i.e. later than two months after the arrival in the host country, was reported by 28 percent of the ECTS students. The proportion of those receiving the first payment very late was high among Spanish (47 %), Italian (45 %) and French students (42 %). Low proportions in this respect could be observed among Dutch students (3 %), Danish (4 %) and Irish students

(5 %). Regarding the field of study, very late receipt of the first payment was stated most often by the students of mechanical engineering (41 %), business administration and chemistry (28 % each).

In summarising the typical timing of application, award and financial support by half of the ECTS students ranging closest to the average, we note that students hoping to be awarded an ERASMUS grant in 1991/92 typically had to apply 5-9 months prior to the study abroad period. They got to know as a rule 3-6 months prior to departure whether they were accepted and they were officially notified that they received an ERASMUS grant mostly between 1-5 months prior to their departure. They got to know the amount of grant mostly between three months before and two months after their departure and they typically received the first payment of the grant between the time of departure and three months later.

It is certainly justified to argue that the following proportions of ECTS students were informed or supported extraordinarily late: 16 percent were informed only during the last two months before their departure that they were accepted for the study period abroad while 25 percent did not know for sure even two weeks before the departure whether they would be awarded an ERASMUS grant. Some 53 percent did not know as late as two weeks before departure how much ERASMUS support they would receive and 61 percent had not received any ERASMUS money two weeks after their arrival at the host institution. In comparing these figures with those of the preceding year, no significant changes in the enhancement of the administrative procedures could be observed. On the other hand, the increasing number of ECTS students did not lead to a worsening of the administrative procedures within the programme in those respects.

3

Academic and Administrative Support

3.1 Ways and Areas of Preparation

As a rule, students have to anticipate the challenges presented by life and study abroad and to prepare themselves in various ways prior to the study abroad period. It is generally assumed that preparation helps reduce feelings of uncertainty and ensures the acquisition of knowledge necessary to ease integration and to cope with the academic requirements during the study period abroad. Because of the rapid start of the ECTS pilot programme in 1989/90, the extent of preparation of ECTS students was significantly lower than it was among ICP students in 1988/89. One could assume that the preparatory provisions as well as students' preparatory activities increased over time.

In fact:

- the proportion of students preparing themselves through self-study increased steadily from 65 percent in 1989/90 to 71 percent in 1990/91 and finally 73 percent in 1991/92;
- the use of written material increased from 46 percent in the first year to 55 percent in the second year of ECTS. In the third year of ECTS, this way of preparation decreased to the same level observed in the year of the inauguration of ECTS;
- attendance in optional preparatory courses grew from 38 percent in the first year to 44 percent in the second year and remained stable in the third year (43 %);
- no changes could be observed regarding the proportion of students taking part in preparatory meetings. About 22 percent of each cohort of ECTS students surveyed reported this way of preparation; and

- attending mandatory courses of preparation for the study period abroad was reported by about 15 percent each of ECTS students participating in the first and the second year. In the third year, the proportion reached 20 percent.

Table 3.1
Ways of Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study
(percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Written material	46	52	41	42	45	45
Meetings	25	14	20	19	23	21
Mandatory courses	28	17	31	11	16	20
Optional courses	41	46	38	38	57	43
Self study	69	66	73	79	77	73
No preparation stated	10	8	6	5	4	7
Not ticked	2	4	2	6	1	3
Total	220	208	210	199	223	212
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit recognition granted)?

Although some preparatory activities in the framework of ECTS expanded, they remained by and large less frequent than found, on average, within the framework of the ICPs. Only the attendance in optional courses was mentioned more often by ECTS than ICP students. A lack of preparatory provisions offered by the institutions of higher education participating in ECTS seem to have caused more ECTS students to prepare themselves by self-study (71 % in 1990/91 as compared to 66 % of ICP students in comparable years).

In looking at the use of the most highly organised preparatory provisions as reported by ECTS students 1991/92, we note that:

- 20 percent of the ECTS students (see Table 3.1) participated in mandatory preparatory courses (sometimes additionally in optional courses and or meetings);

- 34 percent participated at least in optional preparatory courses (sometimes also in meetings); and
- 7 percent attended at least preparatory meetings as a minimum.

Thus, a total of 61 percent of 1991/92 ECTS students participated in preparatory meetings and courses (62 % of ECTS students 1990/91 and 55 % of ECTS students 1989/90). Of the remaining students:

- 29 percent reported that they had prepared themselves for the study period abroad without attending meetings and courses (though possibly with the help of written material provided);
- 7 percent stated that they went abroad without any specific preparation; and
- 3 percent did not provide any information on whether they had prepared themselves and, if so, how.

Participation rates in preparatory courses or meetings ranged from 50 percent in medicine to about two-thirds of students in chemistry and mechanical engineering.

In 1991/92, lowest participation rates in preparatory courses or meetings were marked, as Table 3.2 shows, in the case of ECTS students from Belgium (41 %) and Greece (47 %). The respective participation rate was highest among Irish (76 %), German (71 %) and Danish students (70 %).

Table 3.2
Ways of Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Written material	44	66	26	33	34	40	43	33	68	44	31	45
Meetings	7	21	26	29	14	10	21	52	18	11	18	21
Mandatory courses	4	20	9	16	31	10	23	29	15	6	38	20
Optional courses	37	59	43	40	31	37	40	43	43	56	38	43
Self study	67	81	61	76	70	77	70	67	73	72	69	73
No preparation stated	7	2	9	6	8	17	9	5	10	0	5	7
Not ticked	4	4	0	4	2	0	4	5	0	0	8	3
Total	170	253	174	204	191	190	211	233	225	189	208	212
(n)	(27)	(129)	(23)	(111)	(96)	(30)	(47)	(21)	(40)	(18)	(39)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit/recognition granted)?

The data available allow us to examine how many students actually could have made use of courses or meetings before the study abroad period. Preparatory means were offered to 62 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 - 8 percent less than in the preceding year and the same proportion as in 1989/90, the year of inauguration of the ECTS programme. In most countries, two-thirds of the students in 1991/92 or even more were provided with preparatory means, in contrast with less than half of the Greek (47 %) and Danish students (48 %). By and large, we note that the level of participation in preparatory activities on the part of the students was clearly influenced by the preparatory provisions offered by the institutions.

Table 3.3
Ways of Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92 Regarding Society and Culture of Host Country, by Field of Study (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Written material	25	18	16	19	16	20
Meetings	6	4	2	3	3	4
Courses: mandatory	5	1	1	0	1	2
Courses: optional	4	13	5	1	10	6
Self-study	41	49	47	48	44	45
No preparation stated	39	31	38	32	37	36
Not ticked	2	4	2	6	1	3
Total	121	121	110	110	112	115
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit/recognition granted)?

About 40 percent of the participants in preparatory courses reported that at least some of those courses were part of the regular course programme. This was most often stated by British (67 %) and least often by Greek students (17 %).

Students were asked to specify their ways of preparation in terms of four different topics:

- 80 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 prepared themselves through learning a foreign language (as compared to 77 % of the ECTS students 1990/91 and 69 % of the ECTS students 1989/90), 13 percent of these with the help of respective mandatory courses provided (see Table 3.6);
- 67 percent regarding practical matters (65 % and 56 %), 15 percent of those with the help of meetings (see Table 3.5);
- 61 percent as regards host country culture and society (56 % and 51 %), 7 percent of these with the help of respective courses provided (see Table 3.3); and
- 47 percent reported academic preparation (42 % and 35 %), 13 percent with the help of respective courses provided (see Table 3.4);

Table 3.4
Ways of Academic Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Written material	14	15	7	7	8	10
Meetings	7	7	3	4	4	5
Courses: mandatory	11	4	11	7	10	9
Courses: optional	6	7	4	4	6	5
Self-study	19	27	27	40	16	26
No preparation stated	51	51	50	41	62	50
Not ticked	2	4	2	6	1	3
Total	109	115	105	109	107	109
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit/recognition granted)?

The increasing number of students in each of the four areas who prepared themselves in various ways could be on one hand an expression of the increasing sensitivity for the importance of preparation or, more simply, be due to the fact that

ECTS students of the second and the third year were informed at an earlier stage about their opportunity to study abroad and, thus, could prepare themselves more thoroughly.

About two-thirds of ECTS students 1991/92 prepared themselves on practical matters and the culture and society of the host country, mostly through self-study and the use of written material - only 5 percent attended courses for those purposes. The highest proportion of students preparing themselves on practical matters and on host country culture and society were from Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands, while Belgian, Danish and Italian students paid least attention to those aspects.

Table 3.5
Ways of Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92 Regarding Practical Matters of Living and Studying in Host Country, by Field of Study
(percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Written material	32	39	31	32	27	32
Meetings	15	10	16	14	17	15
Courses: mandatory	1	1	1	2	2	1
Courses: optional	2	4	2	3	8	4
Self-study	37	34	32	40	33	36
No preparation stated	34	27	34	26	32	30
Not ticked	2	4	2	6	1	3
Total	123	120	119	121	120	121
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit/recognition granted)?

Less than half of ECTS students participated in any academic preparation for the study period abroad. Again, self-study prevailed, while only 13 percent of the students prepared themselves academically by attending courses. Courses offering academic preparation were most often attended by students in business administration (16 %) and least often by students in medicine (10 %). Not a single student from Belgium and Greece attended courses for academic preparation.

ECTS students in 1991/92 gave the highest priority to foreign language preparation: 80 percent prepared themselves linguistically, thereby 52 percent through

self-study and 49 percent through participation in courses, while 13 percent attended mandatory language courses.

Table 3.6
Ways of Linguistic Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Written material	14	6	10	10	13	11
Meetings	1	0	0	2	3	1
Courses: mandatory	21	15	20	3	6	13
Courses: optional	37	39	34	34	53	39
Self-study	45	39	48	65	55	52
No preparation stated	23	18	15	16	13	17
Not ticked	2	4	2	6	1	3
Total	143	123	129	136	143	136
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit/recognition granted)?

Students going to Belgium, Denmark and Ireland took part less often in linguistic preparation than students going to other European countries. In the case of Belgium, this might be due to the fact that about a tenth each of the ECTS students hosted in Belgium were from France and the Netherlands and therefore did not need any language preparation. Almost all students going to Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain prepared themselves linguistically. Participation in foreign language courses was most frequent among students going to Portugal (100 %) and Spain (61 %).

Altogether, a relatively low percentage of students enrolled in medicine (34 %) did not prepare themselves linguistically compared to students from other fields.

Table 3.7
Ways of Linguistic Preparation for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Host Country (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Written material	10	8	13	16	13	17	17	0	7	0	11	11
Meetings	0	0	0	3	1	0	6	0	0	0	1	1
Courses: mandatory	3	12	6	17	9	0	6	17	43	0	16	13
Courses: optional	35	39	19	45	53	25	48	29	14	100	31	39
Self-study	48	38	56	58	56	50	67	52	71	50	46	52
No preparation stated	26	24	31	12	9	17	13	29	0	0	19	17
Not ticked	10	3	0	0	5	8	0	2	0	0	3	3
Total	132	124	125	151	147	117	156	129	136	150	128	136
(n)	(31)	(66)	(16)	(69)	(98)	(12)	(54)	(42)	(14)	(6)	(173)	(581)

Question 3.1: How did you prepare for your stay abroad before you actually left? What courses did you attend? If you attended courses, were they part of the regular study course programme (academic credit/recognition granted)?

3.2 Assessment of Preparatory Provisions

The assessment of the preparatory provisions turned out not to be very enthusiastic. The overall assessment was 3.1 in 1991/92 on a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 = "very poor" (3.2 in the preceding year and 3.0 in 1989/90). Provisions of preparation regarding practical matters of living and studying in the host country and those regarding host country culture and society were rated worst (3.3 each). Better ratings than in the preceding year could be observed regarding means of academic preparation (3.0 as compared to 3.4). Means of foreign language preparation were most favourably assessed (2.5 as compared to 2.6 in the preceding year and 2.5 in 1989/90).

As Table 3.8 shows, ECTS students 1991/92 enrolled in mechanical engineering assessed preparatory provisions slightly better, in general, than students of the other fields of study. History (3.6) and medical students (3.4) were least satisfied with preparatory means on practical matters of living and studying abroad as well as regarding the society and culture of the host country (3.4 and 3.6). Academic preparation was most negatively assessed by students in mechanical engineering (3.3) and history and chemistry students were least satisfied with linguistic preparation (2.8 and 2.7).

In excluding provisions for foreign language preparation, which are generally most positively assessed, we observe that notably French and Greek ECTS students rated the preparatory provisions of their home institutions more negatively than students from other countries. As Table 3.9 shows, Danish and Italian students were most satisfied with the preparatory provisions.

Table 3.8
Assessment of Preparatory Provision for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (mean*)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Practical matters	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.3
Society and culture	2.9	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.3
Academic preparation	2.9	3.1	2.7	2.8	3.3	3.0
Linguistic preparation	2.3	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.5
Preparatory provision overall	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.1
(n)	(64)	(31)	(52)	(62)	(60)	(269)

Question 3.2: How do you assess the preparatory provision?
* On a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 "very poor"

Table 3.9
Assessment of Preparatory Provision for the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution of Higher Education (mean*)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Practical matters	2.7	3.3	3.8	3.4	4.2	3.3	2.6	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.3
Society and culture	3.0	3.6	2.3	3.4	3.8	3.0	2.7	2.5	3.5	2.0	2.9	3.3
Academic preparation	3.3	3.1	2.3	3.1	3.3	3.8	2.5	2.7	3.2	2.3	2.6	3.0
Linguistic preparation	2.3	2.3	1.4	2.5	2.7	3.3	2.6	2.1	2.2	2.9	2.5	2.5
Preparatory provision overall	3.0	3.2	2.5	2.8	3.5	3.4	2.5	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1
(n)	(10)	(57)	(11)	(40)	(44)	(13)	(28)	(14)	(21)	(10)	(21)	(269)

Question 3.2: How do you assess the preparatory provision?
* On a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 "very poor"

3.3 Assistance and Advice Provided by Home and Host Institution

In addition to issues of preparation, students were also asked about the assistance, guidance, and advice they were provided by their home and by their host institutions concerning the study period abroad. They were asked to state both the extent to which they were provided assistance ("substantial", "modest", "none"), and the degree of satisfaction they felt with the assistance (scale from 1 = "very high" to 5 = "very low"). They were provided a list of 12 identical categories for both, assistance from home and host institution and two additional categories with regard to the host institution which refer - like the questions about preparation - to academic issues, foreign language, host culture and society, as well as practical matters abroad. Further, students were asked about the advice and assistance provided by the home and host institution regarding personal matters and information about the ECTS programme. While foreign language, academic and personal matters were referred to in an aggregate way, specific aspects of living and studying abroad were addressed, as well as aspects of the culture and society of the host country.

Almost all students in 1991/92 were provided assistance in one way or the other. Less than one percent reported no assistance in any of the 14 categories by the host institution of higher education; in addition, one percent reported no assistance by the home institution. Except for information about the ECTS scheme and financial matters, the respective host institutions provided more assistance than the home institutions, as a comparison of Tables 3.10 and 3.11 indicates.

Assistance varied substantially by area. No assistance, guidance, and advice was provided, according to the students' statements, regarding:

- living and studying abroad (4 % of the students by the home institution and 2 percent by the host institution);
- information about the ECTS programme (7 and 28 % respectively);
- academic matters (24 and 12 % respectively);
- as regards foreign language training, no guidance by the home institution was reported by 38 percent of the students as compared with 28 percent by the host institution;
- culture and society (55 and 9 % respectively); and finally
- 56 percent of the students did not report any guidance regarding personal matters by the home institution compared to 40 percent by the host institution of higher education.

The proportion of 1991/92 ECTS students stating the various kinds of assistance and advice provided by home and host institution was almost identical to those reported by the preceding ECTS student cohorts. Again, we observe neither an increase in support nor a decline.

Table 3.10
Assistance/Guidance/Advice Concerning the Study Period Abroad 1991/92 Provided by Home Institution, by Country of Home Institution (percent)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Information about ECTS												
Substantial	56	42	17	54	31	41	48	45	55	28	32	42
Modest	37	50	83	41	58	48	50	45	43	67	59	51
None at all	7	8	0	5	12	10	2	10	3	6	8	7
Registration, course selection.												
Substantial	22	24	9	43	26	34	48	10	28	50	11	30
Modest	63	48	57	37	35	45	41	70	67	39	50	46
None at all	15	28	35	20	39	21	11	20	5	11	39	25
Accommodation												
Substantial	12	15	14	32	19	27	41	30	25	39	8	23
Modest	46	29	45	34	34	40	26	40	48	50	38	35
None at all	42	56	41	35	47	33	33	30	28	11	54	42
Matters regarding financial support												
Substantial	44	19	30	28	26	27	20	65	60	22	19	29
Modest	37	49	65	44	54	47	50	35	40	56	62	49
None at all	19	32	4	28	20	27	30	0	0	22	19	23
Practical matters												
Substantial	8	2	22	13	8	13	22	5	5	6	8	9
Modest	27	24	22	27	21	30	18	40	30	29	27	25
None at all	65	74	57	60	71	57	60	55	65	65	65	65
Academic matters												
Substantial	20	21	9	34	22	13	22	25	8	22	9	21
Modest	56	53	52	51	48	70	57	60	65	72	57	55
None at all	24	26	39	15	30	17	22	15	28	6	34	24
Work placement matters												
Substantial	13	11	6	0	14	20	19	0	30	0	18	12
Modest	13	41	19	11	33	25	38	57	35	44	24	29
None at all	75	48	75	89	52	55	43	43	35	56	59	59
Inform. about host inst.												
Substantial	11	11	0	20	11	17	15	21	8	17	14	13
Modest	56	52	39	49	45	43	52	42	65	50	42	49
None at all	33	37	61	31	44	40	33	37	28	33	44	37

(to be cont.)

(Table 3.10 cont.)	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Language training												
Substantial	17	19	19	21	21	23	20	22	26	33	34	22
Modest	50	34	38	37	41	40	34	39	49	56	43	40
None at all	33	46	43	42	37	37	45	39	26	11	23	38
Host country												
Substantial	4	3	0	7	5	3	16	0	0	11	11	6
Modest	37	30	9	31	31	40	40	40	50	44	35	34
None at all	59	67	91	62	64	57	44	60	50	44	54	61
Local community of host inst.												
Substantial	4	6	0	8	1	7	14	5	13	0	3	6
Modest	27	19	0	27	16	40	26	20	43	33	19	24
None at all	69	74	100	65	83	53	60	75	45	67	78	70
Personal matters												
Substantial	13	10	10	11	18	17	23	0	8	0	3	12
Modest	46	32	15	28	45	17	25	16	44	56	24	32
None at all	42	58	75	61	37	67	52	84	49	44	73	56
(n)	(24)	(118)	(20)	(99)	(78)	(30)	(44)	(19)	(39)	(16)	(37)	(524)

Question 4.2: To what extent were you provided with assistance/guidance/advice concerning your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, by your home institution prior to the study period abroad?

It was expected that host institutions would play a more important role in assistance concerning the study period abroad than the home institutions of higher education, because the host institutions are in the position to provide such assistance more directly and more immediately. If the respective institutions provided assistance in accordance to their potential, one would expect that students' satisfaction with the assistance provided would not differ substantially. Tables 3.12 and 3.13, however, show that students were less satisfied with the assistance and advice provided by the home institution (3.2 on average for all categories) than by the host institution (2.7). Both of these scores were almost identical to the ratings by ECTS students in 1990/91 and 1989/90 and slightly better than the respective ratings recorded by ICP students 1990/91.

In general, we note that there is a positive correlation between the amount of assistance offered and the degree of satisfaction felt about it. This shows that there was a corresponding demand for assistance, guidance, and advice and that good support provided was appreciated in general. Similar results were observed in all surveys of ICP and ECTS students undertaken.

Table 3.11
Assistance/Guidance/Advice Concerning the Study Period Abroad 1991/92 Provided by Host Institution, by Host Country (percent)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Information about ECTS												
Substantial	62	29	43	22	17	25	15	23	21	0	34	27
Modest	28	42	36	45	47	50	50	48	57	83	44	45
None at all	10	29	21	33	36	25	35	30	21	17	23	28
Registration, course selection												
Substantial	83	39	80	52	46	58	40	51	57	17	60	53
Modest	17	44	7	36	47	42	42	34	29	50	34	37
None at all	0	17	13	12	6	0	17	15	14	33	6	10
Accommodation												
Substantial	66	68	75	31	51	42	45	49	79	0	75	58
Modest	31	25	13	29	30	50	30	37	21	67	17	26
None at all	3	8	13	40	19	8	25	15	0	33	9	16
Matters regarding financial support												
Substantial	10	5	0	9	8	0	10	5	7	0	9	7
Modest	21	21	50	13	26	67	25	18	7	17	28	24
None at all	69	74	50	78	66	33	65	78	86	83	63	68
Practical matters												
Substantial	59	26	31	17	18	30	26	20	29	0	31	27
Modest	31	39	56	29	43	30	30	28	57	40	36	36
None at all	10	35	13	55	38	40	43	53	14	60	33	37
Academic matters												
Substantial	55	30	56	43	39	33	46	38	36	0	59	46
Modest	45	47	25	48	45	58	46	50	43	67	34	43
None at all	0	23	19	9	16	8	8	13	21	33	6	12
Work placement matters												
Substantial	44	17	55	17	54	17	21	21	50	0	36	34
Modest	33	30	27	37	25	50	21	43	13	0	32	30
None at all	22	53	18	46	21	33	58	36	38	100	32	36

(to be cont.)

(Table 3.11 cont.)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Inform. about host inst.												
Substantial	43	29	40	29	28	42	25	28	36	17	46	35
Modest	50	38	33	50	54	42	59	53	50	17	40	46
None at all	7	33	27	21	18	17	16	20	14	67	14	19
Language training												
Substantial	52	48	50	44	37	70	43	21	79	17	38	42
Modest	41	20	31	36	30	20	35	37	14	67	30	31
None at all	7	31	19	20	33	10	22	42	7	17	32	28
Host country												
Substantial	28	14	40	24	23	36	21	23	29	17	15	20
Modest	45	43	33	39	40	55	37	28	36	0	46	41
None at all	28	43	27	37	38	9	42	50	36	83	39	39
Local community of host inst.												
Substantial	21	20	33	26	27	18	18	23	21	17	34	26
Modest	52	48	33	38	37	73	45	33	36	0	39	41
None at all	28	31	33	36	36	9	37	44	43	83	27	33
Personal matters												
Substantial	39	15	40	31	17	42	10	21	14	33	34	26
Modest	25	33	27	27	31	33	40	45	43	33	36	34
None at all	36	52	33	42	52	25	50	34	43	33	30	40
Social contacts												
Substantial	21	32	47	42	23	64	23	38	50	17	37	33
Modest	52	41	40	35	41	18	46	33	36	33	35	38
None at all	28	27	13	23	35	18	31	28	14	50	29	28
Cultural, recreational activities												
Substantial	62	38	47	49	41	18	23	57	50	17	64	49
Modest	31	39	20	31	45	55	46	25	43	17	27	34
None at all	7	23	33	20	14	27	31	18	7	67	9	17
(n)	(29)	(66)	(15)	(65)	(94)	(11)	(52)	(40)	(14)	(6)	(169)	(561)

Question 4.2: To what extent were you provided with assistance/guidance/advice concerning your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, by your home institution prior to the study period abroad?

Table 3.12
Degree of Satisfaction with Assistance/Guidance/Advice Provided by Home Institution in 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (mean*)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Information about ECTS	2.2	2.7	3.0	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.6
Registration, course selection	2.7	3.1	3.3	2.9	3.3	2.5	2.2	3.0	3.0	2.6	3.5	3.0
Accommodation	3.2	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.1	2.6	3.5	3.3	2.7	3.9	3.3
Matters regarding financial support	2.5	3.2	2.3	3.5	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.3	2.2	3.1	3.0	3.0
Practical matters	3.4	3.8	3.2	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.7
Academic matters	2.7	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.3	2.9	2.8	3.3	2.9	3.6	3.1
Work placement matters	3.7	3.2	3.1	4.3	3.5	3.8	3.3	3.7	2.8	4.1	3.7	3.6
Inform. about host institution	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3
Language training	2.7	3.2	3.0	3.6	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.8	3.1
Host country	3.2	3.5	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.1	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.5
Local community of host institution	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.6	3.4	3.6	3.1	3.8	3.5	3.7
Personal matters	2.7	3.2	3.1	3.7	3.1	3.8	3.1	3.7	3.0	3.2	3.5	3.3

Question 4.2: To what extent were you provided with assistance/guidance/advice concerning your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, by your home institution prior to the study period abroad? And to what extent were you satisfied with the assistance/guidance/advice provided?

* On a scale from 1 = "very high" to 5 "very low"

Satisfaction with assistance by the home institution of higher education differed - in some respects substantially - according to the country of the home institution, as Table 3.12 indicates. Italian, Belgian and Dutch ECTS students in 1991/92 were most satisfied, while Spanish, French and British students were least satisfied with the assistance provided by their home institutions. Respective differences according to the field of study were relatively small.

As regards assistance and advice provided by the host institution of higher education, ECTS students in 1991/92 spending their study period abroad in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark were most satisfied and those going to Portugal,

Italy and Spain least satisfied. One should bear in mind, however, that the number of ECTS students going to some of these countries was relatively small.

Table 3.13
Degree of Satisfaction with Assistance/Guidance/Advice Provided by Host Institution in 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Information about ECTS programme	2.2	2.8	2.4	3.0	3.1	2.6	3.2	3.2	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.8
Registration, course selection	1.9	2.8	2.0	2.5	2.5	2.0	2.9	2.6	2.4	3.8	2.2	2.4
Accommodation	1.9	2.1	2.1	3.4	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.6	1.8	4.8	1.9	2.4
Matters regarding financial support	3.5	3.2	2.8	3.9	3.4	2.9	3.7	3.4	3.1	4.6	3.4	3.4
Practical matters	2.2	3.2	2.8	3.5	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.5	4.2	2.6	3.0
Academic matters	1.9	2.8	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.6	3.7	2.0	2.4
Work placement matters	2.3	3.3	2.5	3.5	2.3	2.8	3.4	3.2	2.0	.	2.7	2.8
Inform. about host institution	2.5	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.4	4.3	2.3	2.6
Language training	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.8	3.4	1.6	3.7	2.7	2.7
Host country	2.7	3.0	2.1	3.0	2.8	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.3	3.8	2.9	2.9
Local community of host institution	2.7	2.9	2.4	3.0	2.8	2.6	3.4	3.1	2.4	3.8	2.6	2.8
Personal matters	2.7	3.3	2.4	2.8	3.1	2.4	2.9	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.8
Social contacts	3.0	2.5	2.1	2.4	3.1	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.1	3.2	2.5	2.7
Cultural, recreational activities	1.9	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.3	1.9	3.2	1.8	2.2
(n)	(29)	(64)	(14)	(60)	(92)	(11)	(50)	(41)	(13)	(6)	(164)	(544)

Question 4.2: To what extent were you provided with assistance/guidance/advice concerning your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, by your home institution prior to the study period abroad? And to what extent were you satisfied with the assistance/guidance/advice provided?

* On a scale from 1 = "very high" to 5 "very low"

Altogether, ECTS students viewed both preparation for the study abroad period and assistance concerning the study abroad period provided by their home institu-

tion with some caution. They had a somewhat more positive view about the assistance provided by the host institution. These findings suggest that, in particular, provisions and assistance by the home institutions in these respects ought to be improved.

4

Life and Study Abroad

4.1 Cultural and Social Activities in the Host Country

Learning about the host country culture and society and experiencing the host country directly is obviously essential in order to cope with life and study in other countries, to serve one's own social and cultural needs in the host country and to enrich knowledge and competencies required in a future in which traditional boundaries disappear or lose their importance. ECTS students of each cohort surveyed undertook a wide range of activities abroad in order to broaden their experience. Around 74 percent of ECTS students in 1991/92 often had conversations with host country students and 63 percent each with other host country nationals and with host country teaching staff. Listening and reading newspapers was an activity frequently undertaken by 80 percent of students and visiting museums and attending concerts by 75 percent of the respondents; 67 percent often experienced joint leisure activities with host country nationals, as Table 4.1 shows.

In contrast to the findings of previous surveys on ECTS and ICP students, the frequency of contacts ECTS students 91/92 have had with teaching staff did not depend on the duration of the period abroad. Although the proportion of students with short stays abroad, i.e. a period of about three months, stated frequent contacts with teaching staff of the host country (48%) less often than their counterparts who stayed longer, no significant differences could be observed in comparing students spending 4-6 months abroad and students spending 7-12 months abroad (59 % and 61 %). Regarding an overall decrease of frequent contacts with teaching staff (from 64 % to 59 %) one may argue that the presence of ECTS students at the host institutions has become more and more a matter of procedure. Thus, over time, less attention will be paid to them by the teaching staff of the host countries.

On the other hand, the frequency of contacts with teaching staff clearly differs by field of study. About three-quarters of students in chemistry stated frequent contacts while only half of the medical students reported positively on this aspect.

ECTS students in 1991/92 spending their study period abroad in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Portugal and Greece most frequently had contacts with host country academic staff, while those going to France and Germany reported less frequent contacts of that kind. With the exception of Ireland, communication outside institutions of higher education were reported far more often by students spending their study period abroad in the Mediterranean countries.

Table 4.1
Experiences and Activities 1991/92 Abroad, by Host Country (percent*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Contact with teaching staff	55	47	63	52	39	67	57	54	71	67	80	59
Conversation with students	77	70	81	80	68	92	67	90	64	83	73	74
Conversation with other people	45	55	56	83	61	75	83	76	64	83	53	63
News about host country	74	65	75	93	79	67	87	83	57	83	83	80
Travelling	71	42	56	71	60	67	79	83	79	83	72	67
Cultural activities	87	68	88	78	77	82	77	63	64	33	77	75
Leisure activities	65	71	69	81	59	92	77	66	50	83	62	67
(n)	(31)	(65)	(16)	(69)	(96)	(12)	(53)	(41)	(14)	(6)	(172)	(575)

Question 4.1: Please state the frequency of the following experiences and activities during your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad:

* Percent responding "1" or "2" on a scale from 1 = "very often" to 5 = "not at all"

Students enrolled in medicine reported frequent contacts and discussions with host country students (76 %) as well as with host country people outside the system of higher education (74 %), as Table 4.2 shows. Activities such as visiting museums, attending concerts etc. were most frequently reported by students in history (81 %) and medicine (80 %).

Table 4.2
Experiences and Activities 1991/92 Abroad, by Field of Study (percent*)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Contact with teaching staff	56	61	74	50	63	59
Conversation with students	77	69	68	76	75	74
Conversation with other people	60	60	56	74	62	63
News about host country	76	86	74	84	82	80
Travelling	77	66	55	65	69	67
Cultural activities	73	81	77	80	67	75
Leisure activities	71	72	63	67	64	67
(n)	(154)	(69)	(95)	(147)	(110)	(575)

Question 4.1: Please state the frequency of the following experiences and activities during your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad:

* Percent responding "1" or "2" on a scale from 1 = "very often" to 5 = "not at all"

4.2 Accommodation in the Host Country

Half of the students supported in the framework of the ECTS programme in 1991/92 were provided with university accommodation (halls of residence furnished by the institutions of higher education or other agencies in charge of accommodation of students) during the study period abroad (as compared to 57% in the previous year and 55 % in 1989/90). As Table 4.3 shows, about one third of the students lived in an apartment or house abroad which they shared with other students. As compared to previous years, this type of accommodation became more and more important. It increased from 22 percent in 1989/90 to 31 percent in 1990/91 and 37 percent in 1991/92. Renting of a room in a private home was stated by 7 percent of ECTS students in 1989/90, 9 percent in 1990/91 and 6 percent in 1991/92.

The proportion of ECTS students in 1991/92 provided with university accommodation varied considerably according to the host country. About two-thirds of the students going to Germany (71 %), Greece (67 %) and the United Kingdom (65 %) as well as more than half of the students spending their study period

abroad in Belgium and France lived in halls of residence. On the other hand, few students going to Spain (4 %) lived in university halls of residence; instead, living in apartments or houses together with other students was most common for them (74 % respectively).

Table 4.3
Accommodation During Study Period 1991/92 at Host Institution, by Host Country (percent)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
University accommodation	58	71	38	4	54	67	37	38	43	0	65	50
Own apartment/ house	3	5	0	0	3	8	2	2	0	33	2	3
Apartment/house with other students	32	21	31	74	34	17	48	45	57	50	26	37
Apartment/house with parents/relatives	3	2	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	1
Apartment/house with partner/children	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	7	0	1	1
Room with another family	3	5	25	14	3	0	9	7	0	0	3	6
Hotel/pension/ boarding house	0	0	6	6	0	8	4	5	0	0	1	2
Other accommodation	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	17	4	2
Not ticked	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	100	103	100	101	101	100	106	100	107	100	102	102
(n)	(31)	(66)	(16)	(69)	(98)	(12)	(54)	(42)	(14)	(6)	(173)	(581)

Question 6.1: Where did you live: (a) immediately prior to your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, (b) most of the time during the ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, and (c) where do you live now?

The majority of ECTS students in 1991/92 (62 %) stayed in the same place for the whole study period abroad, 24 percent moved once, and 14 percent twice or even more often. On average, students changed their place of living 0.6 times during their study period abroad (slightly less than ECTS students of previous years).

Only 53 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 could move directly into a regular room or other kind of accommodation upon arrival: 35 percent had to spend a waiting time, lasting up to one week, while a further 11 percent waited for up to 1 month, and 3 percent of the students for more than 1 month. ECTS students going to Portugal (20 days) and Spain (6.8 days) had the longest waiting periods on average. The shortest waiting periods on average were reported by students studying in Belgium, the Netherlands and France (up to two days on average). Students not being provided accommodation in university halls of residence during their period abroad waited, on average, twice as long before finding their first regular accommodation (on average six days).

Table 4.4
Quality of Accommodation in Host Country 1991/92 and in Home Country
(mean*)

	Country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
In host country (by incoming students)	2.4	2.0	1.6	2.7	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.4	3.0	2.4	2.4
In home country (by students going to the respective host country)	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.7
In home country (by home students)	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.7	2.0	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.7
(n)	(27)	(129)	(23)	(107)	(95)	(29)	(47)	(20)	(39)	(18)	(39)	(573)

Question 6.4: How would you, in general, describe the quality of your accommodation in the host country and in your home country?

* On a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 "very bad"

ECTS students were asked to assess the quality of the accommodation in the host country and to compare it with the quality of their accommodation during their study at their home institution. Altogether, students were not dissatisfied with their accommodation in the host country (see Table 4.4). On average, ECTS students in 1991/92 rated 2.4 on a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 = "very bad". This was a slightly better result than that for the ECTS students of the preceding years (2.6 and 2.5). ECTS students considered accommodation abroad, however, still clearly worse than accommodation at home which was rated 1.7 on average in 1991/92 and 1.8 each on average in the preceding years. Actually, 16 percent of the ECTS students rated their accommodation abroad as bad (scale points 4 and 5), but only 3 percent did so regarding accommodation at home.

Over the years, one host country clearly stood out in quality of accommodation provided, as Table 4.4 shows. On average, ECTS students studying in Denmark rated the housing provided by far the most positively (between 1.4 and 1.7). Students going to this country rated the quality of accommodation slightly better than the quality of accommodation they had in their respective home countries. On the other hand the quality of accommodation in France and Spain was rated below average by at least two of the three cohorts of ECTS students surveyed. In comparison, ICP students had also rated accommodation in Denmark positively, while accommodation in France and Spain had been viewed least favourably.

4.3 Funding of the Study Period Abroad

Of all the expenses ECTS students had during the study period abroad in 1991/92 (including tuition fees and other related fees), 57.3 percent was funded by the students themselves or their families while 23.5 percent was covered by the ERASMUS grant. Other grants and loans covered 18.2 percent of the expenses during the study period abroad. These figures are similar to those of the preceding years.

The largest proportion of expenses covered by the ECTS grant was stated by Portuguese (54 %) and Irish (45 %) students, as Table 4.5 shows. On the opposite end, Greek, Spain (16 % each), French and German (19 % each) found that the ECTS grant covered a very low percentage of their expenses while abroad.

Home country grants and loans covered the highest proportion of expenditures borne by Danish (56.1 %), Dutch (47.9 %) and British students (27.4 %). In Greece, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Belgium, the parents, relatives and the students themselves had to cover almost half or more than half of the expenses.

ECTS students and their parents surveyed in 1991/92 had paid 78.7 percent on average of the expenses incurred while studying at the home institution. Eighteen percent of the expenses were covered by home country grants and loans, and 3.3 percent from other sources. The data do not differ much from those provided by the 1990/91 ICP students. As can be seen from the data on the study abroad period, grants and loans are the major sources for funding of study at home for Danish (75.4 %), Dutch (60.4 %) and British students (41.2 %).

Table 4.5
Financing of Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (mean)

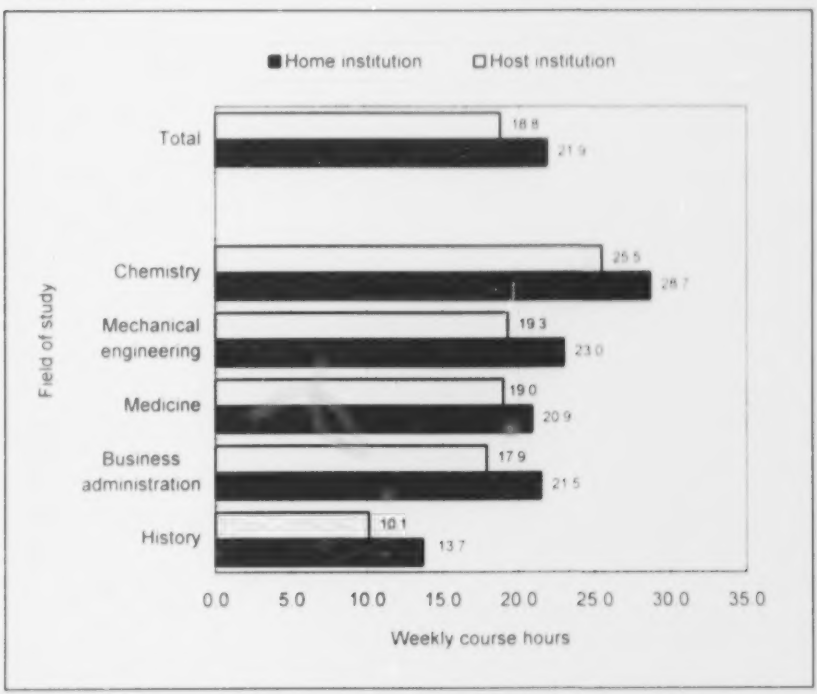
	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
ECTS grant	31.3	19.1	22.7	15.6	18.9	15.9	39.0	44.7	21.8	54.1	31.4	23.5
Other E.C. programme grant	3.4	.2	1.1	.5	.4	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0	4.6	.7
Home country grant/scholarship	3.8	4.8	45.3	7.3	8.4	.6	.8	2.0	43.9	1.3	25.8	10.8
Home country loan	.0	5.1	10.8	1.7	3.1	.0	.0	1.3	4.0	1.3	1.6	2.9
Host country grant/scholarship	.0	.4	.0	.8	1.1	.3	.2	.0	1.2	.0	.8	.4
Support by work placement or employer	.0	.7	.2	.7	1.7	.3	1.6	.3	3.7	.0	.0	1.0
Other type of support abroad	.0	1.1	.0	.6	.4	.3	.1	.0	.3	.6	.0	.5
Other grants	3.2	1.1	4.1	2.9	3.1	.0	.0	3.8	1.5	.0	.6	1.9
Parents, relatives	49.8	48.8	5.3	57.8	54.1	78.6	51.3	32.6	17.5	39.7	24.8	46.9
Own money (work, savings)	8.5	16.3	10.0	11.1	8.2	3.9	7.0	15.6	6.1	2.8	10.4	10.4
Other sources	.0	2.3	.4	.9	1.7	.0	.0	.0	.1	.3	.0	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(26)	(127)	(23)	(107)	(93)	(29)	(47)	(20)	(39)	(16)	(36)	(563)

Question 5.1: How have you financed your study at your home institution up to now, and how did you finance your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad (including travel and tuition fees if any)? Please estimate percentages (including possibly value of free rent, etc.). If applicable, state the name of the support scheme or of the supporting agency.

4.4 Study at the Host University

ECTS students in 1991/92 took a weekly average of 18.8 hours of courses (including laboratory work, etc.) abroad (see Chart 4.1). The weekly course hour load was on average 3.1 hours (14 %) less than that taken at the home institution of higher education (21.9 hours). These figures are similar to those of ECTS students of the preceding years. The number of hours taken abroad by 1991/92 ECTS students varied markedly by field of study: from 10.1 hours in history to 25.5 hours in chemistry.

Chart 4.1
Weekly Course Hours at Host and Home Institution in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)



Question 4.5: How many hours (= 60 minutes) per week did you exclusively take courses (including laboratory work etc.)?

The total work load, including practical projects, foreign language training, independent study, work on thesis, field trips etc., of ECTS students while abroad was on average 38.8 hours per week (about 4 hours less than stated by ECTS students 1990/91). As Table 4.6 shows, 9 hours on average were devoted by ECTS students to independent study, about 7 hours to practical projects, 2 hours to work on thesis, 1.4 hours to field trips and 2.5 hours to foreign language training. Students enrolled in chemistry and medicine spent a substantial proportion of their time on practical projects (15.8 and 12.1 hours respectively).

Table 4.6
Weekly Hours Spent on Study During Academic Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (mean)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Courses	18.1	16.5	13.0	15.4	18.7	16.5
Practical projects, laboratory work	2.0	1.9	15.8	12.1	5.1	7.4
Independent study	8.5	11.3	8.3	8.6	8.5	8.8
Work on thesis	1.8	4.6	2.7	5	2.0	2.0
Excursions	1.6	1.9	6	2.1	7	1.4
Language training	3.3	2.5	1.4	1.9	3.0	2.5
Other study activities	5	1	3	7	3	4
Total	35.6	38.8	41.9	40.6	38.2	38.8
(n)	(152)	(69)	(96)	(142)	(108)	(567)

Question 4.4: How many hours per week did you spend on average on the following types of study? Please estimate for the ECTS academic study period 1991/92 only (i.e. excluding work placement and holiday periods).

Most students used the opportunity of studying at an institution of higher education of another EC country to participate in courses complementing those offered at the home institution. About two-thirds of the ECTS students in 1991/92 took courses involving content not available (or of lesser quality) at the home institution. About a half experienced new teaching methods while one third utilised laboratories or other facilities not available (or of lesser quality) at the home institution. In addition, 43 percent of the students took courses to broaden their academic and cultural horizon which were not required and not directly linked to

their area of specialisation. About half of the students took courses in the host country language and 13 percent courses in other languages. About a fifth of the students reported that they developed a new area of specialisation, and 8 percent changed their earlier chosen specialisation. Altogether, these findings are similar in all surveys undertaken since 1988/89 on ERASMUS students.

Table 4.7
Type of Academic Enhancement During the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Courses not available at the home inst.	67	86	74	36	73	64
Courses involving new teaching methods	63	56	45	57	53	56
Laboratories not available at the home institution	38	14	60	22	38	35
Courses to broaden academic, cultural background	43	48	28	46	51	43
New areas of specialisation	19	30	34	5	21	20
Earlier chosen specialisation	9	7	8	8	8	8
Language courses in the host country language	49	54	48	32	67	49
Language courses in another language	27	7	10	7	8	13
Not ticked	5	1	2	9	5	5
Total	321	303	310	223	324	292
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 4.6: During your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, did you take ...

As Table 4.7 shows, some substantial differences regarding field of study could be observed: ECTS students enrolled in medicine took significantly less courses involving content not available at home. Chemistry students took fewer courses to

broaden their academic and cultural background and more often develop a new area of specialisation. Business students took far more languages courses in other than the host country language.

The language of instruction was the host country language for 84 percent of the ECTS students (similar in the previous years of ECTS). As Table 4.8 shows, the host country language was least often solely the language of instruction for students going to Denmark (33 %), the Netherlands (43 %) and Greece (50 %): notably in Denmark, English was frequently used as the language of instruction for incoming ECTS students.

Table 4.8
Language of Instruction* During Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Host Country (percent)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Host	70	86	33	93	81	50	77	93	43	67	96	84
Home	7	0	7	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	1	2
Host+home	3	0	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Home+other	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Host+other	17	6	27	3	11	8	19	2	29	17	3	8
Host+home+other	3	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	6	27	4	0	33	4	0	29	17	0	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(30)	(65)	(15)	(67)	(95)	(12)	(53)	(42)	(14)	(6)	(171)	(570)

Question 4.7: What was the language of instruction in the courses you took at the host institution? If you were taught in more than one language, please state percentages.

* "Home" was coded if host country language and country of home institution language were identical.

Regarding various aspects of teaching and learning, ECTS students noted substantial differences between education at their home and their host institution. Looking at the data by country, the differences perceived ranged from at least 1.0 on average to at most 1.7 on the five-point-scale (from 1 = "strongly emphasised" to 5 = "not at all emphasised"). Largest differences between the home and host institutions were perceived as regards the emphasis placed on oral examinations (1.8), using publications in foreign languages (1.7), out-of-class communication

between teachers and students (1.6), freedom to chose specific areas (1.5) and regular class attendance (1.4). The perceptions by ECTS students in 1991/92 regarding differences between higher education at the home and host institution of higher education were quite similar to those by ECTS students of the preceding year as well as to those by ICP students both in 1988/89 and 1990/91.

4.5 Problems Faced During the Study Period Abroad

Difficulties and problems faced abroad may reduce students' academic progress and personal development. In order to examine the extent to which problems occurred and what major problems ECTS students faced, they were presented with a list of 20 possible problems. Three-quarters of ECTS students reported that they faced problems during their study period abroad, among them:

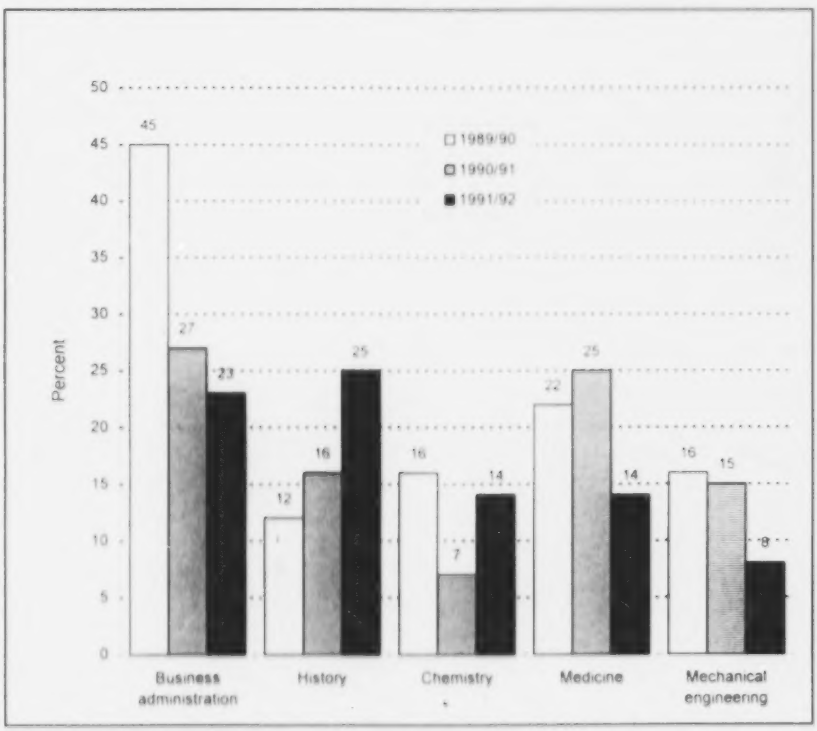
- 52 percent mentioned problems in organising life and study conditions in the host country (accommodation, finance etc.);
- 43 percent problems of study;
- 24 percent foreign language problems;
- 21 percent issues regarding social contacts; and
- about 10 percent mentioned problems regarding the lifestyle of nationals of the host country or climate, food, health etc.

By and large, the proportions of ECTS students in 1991/92 stating problems regarding the different areas were similar to those among the ECTS students of the previous years. However, the proportion of ECTS students who reported serious problems regarding matters of credits and credit transfer decreased from 25 percent in 1989/90 to 18 percent in 1990/91 and 17 percent in 1991/92. This finding would appear to indicate that there is an increasing tendency to implement the practical side of ECTS credit recognition. Obviously, however, not all procedures of awarding credits to courses and credit transfer worked up to the level of students' expectations. As Chart 4.2 shows, this was especially the case in history where 25 percent of the students mentioned serious problems in this respect (9 % more than in the preceding year). Also the proportion of students in business studies who reported matters of crediting and credit transfer as problematic were above average (23 %, the same as in the preceding year). A decrease of problems in the core issue of ECTS could be observed among students in mechanical engineering (from 15 % in 1990/91 to 8 % in 1991/92) and medicine (25 % to 14 %), while the proportion of chemistry students who mentioned problems increased from seven percent in the preceding year to 14 percent in 1991/92.

The most frequent problem stated by ECTS students 1991/92 was the accommodation in the host country (20 % as compared 17 % in the preceding year) with host students in Italy (40 %), Spain (34 %) and France (28 %) stating the highest

level of problems in this respect. Among the other aspects of living conditions, financial matters (19 %) and administrative matters (16 %) were mentioned most often.

Chart 4.2
Serious Problems Regarding Matters of Credits and Credit Transfer, by ECTS Year and Field of Study (percent*)



Question 8.2: To what extent did you have significant problems in any of the following areas during your study period abroad?

* Percent responding "1" or "2" on a scale from 1 = "very serious problems" to 5 = "no problems at all"

About 19 percent of ECTS students faced significant problems in taking examinations in a foreign language while 15 percent had problems with their language of instruction. Notably, 8 percent missed a readiness on the part of the teachers to meet and help foreign students. Only 5 percent of ECTS students ex-

Table 4.9
Problems Faced During the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Host Country (percent*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Matters of crediting/ Credit transfer	11	23	6	27	13	0	13	25	8	0	16	17
Taking courses in a foreign language	7	25	7	13	16	27	18	22	21	50	7	15
Taking examinations in a foreign language	15	24	0	19	23	30	19	28	23	50	12	19
Academic level of courses	0	6	0	13	9	0	6	0	0	0	2	5
Differences in teaching/ learning methods	6	20	14	30	24	0	23	17	8	17	11	18
Readiness of teachers to meet/help foreign students	6	13	7	9	17	0	12	7	8	0	2	8
Differences in class or student project group size	3	9	7	10	3	17	16	2	15	0	1	6
Administrative matters	6	28	20	16	23	8	29	13	0	33	7	16
Financial matters	19	9	27	24	21	8	23	26	8	0	17	19
Guidance concerning academic programme	10	23	0	24	22	0	14	10	15	17	8	14
Guidance concerning non-academic matters	0	10	0	18	14	0	10	10	0	17	5	9
Finding place to concentrate on studies outside class	3	6	0	21	13	8	21	15	8	33	2	10

(to be continued)

(Tab. 4.9 cont.)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Accommodation	10	14	13	34	28	8	40	10	8	17	13	20
Climate, food, health etc.	6	2	6	6	7	8	6	5	8	0	12	8
Lifestyles of nationals in host country	0	9	6	3	7	17	2	0	8	0	7	6
Interaction among/with host country students	0	14	0	7	18	0	4	5	17	0	8	9
Not enough contact with people from your own country	10	5	0	1	2	8	2	2	8	0	6	4
Too much contact with people from your own country	13	11	0	13	9	17	10	8	0	17	15	11
Communicating in foreign language outside the class	10	3	13	3	7	0	2	5	15	0	4	5
Not enough time available for travel	17	17	6	17	18	27	19	18	8	17	12	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(30)	(64)	(16)	(69)	(96)	(11)	(52)	(40)	(12)	(6)	(172)	(568)

Question 8.2: To what extent did you have significant problems in any of the following areas during your study period abroad?

* Percent responding "1" or "2" on a scale from 1 = "very serious problems" to 5 = "no problems at all"

perienced serious problems because the academic level of courses was too high, and only 6 percent considered class size a serious problem.

Another frequently stated problem by ECTS students 1991/92 was the difference in teaching and learning methods between home and host institution (18 %). As Table 4.9 shows, those ECTS students spending their period abroad in Spain, Italy, France or Germany most frequently stated problems in this respect. Guidance concerning academic matters was considered most problematic by ECTS students going to Spain, Germany and France.

In general, British students stated clearly more often that they experienced academic problems abroad than ECTS students from other countries. We should bear in mind that the perception of academic problems might be caused by divergent factors, for example inadequate provisions abroad on the part of the host institution, by poor preparation of the students going abroad or by a high level of expectation on the part of the students, possibly formed by favourable study conditions at home.

Altogether ECTS students in 1991/92 mentioned academic problems slightly less frequently than ECTS students of the preceding years. Regarding problems in other areas, however, only small differences could be observed between the three cohorts of ECTS students.

4.6 Integration into the Academic and Social Life of Students at the Host Institution

Altogether, ECTS students succeeded in becoming integrated into the academic and social life of the host country. As Table 4.10 shows, their average ratings were 2.2 on both aspects on a scale from 1 = "to a great extent" to 5 = "not at all". The ratings were somewhat more positive than those for ECTS students of the preceding year (2.3 regarding both aspects). Academic and social integration was felt to be most successful by the ECTS students spending a study period in Ireland, Denmark or the United Kingdom. Students going to the Netherlands (3.2) and France (2.6) felt least integrated into the academic life and students going to Germany and Italy felt least integrated into the social life of their host country.

Table 4.10
Integration into Academic and Social Life of Students Abroad in 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Integration into academic life	2.3	2.5	1.9	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.5	1.8	2.0	3.2	2.0	2.2
Integration into social life of students	2.1	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.6	2.1	2.2	1.8	3.2	2.2	2.1	2.2
(n)	(31)	(66)	(16)	(69)	(96)	(12)	(52)	(41)	(14)	(6)	(171)	(574)

Question 8.7: To what extent did you feel integrated into the academic and social life of students at your host institution?

* On a scale from 1 = "to a great extent" to 5 "not at all"

5

The Formal Mechanisms of the ECTS System

5.1 Expected Procedures

The ECTS pilot scheme was inaugurated in 1989/90 in order to improve the award of academic recognition through the development of a system of credits and credit transfer. Participating departments are expected to allocate and to award ECTS credits at all stages of a course programme in terms of 60 credits a year (30 per semester, or 20 per term), to provide outgoing students, i.e. those moving to another institution of higher education, any necessary documentation of credits hitherto awarded, and to accept all credits previously awarded by institutions participating in the ECTS scheme to incoming students. In addition, departments participating in the ECTS scheme are expected to support students' mobility in the same way as those in Inter-University Co-operation Programmes are expected to do, i.e. in the case of a sending department to help students academically and administratively prepare for a study period abroad, and, in the case of a receiving department, to provide access to courses and to ease their life and study abroad through various means of academic, administrative, and possibly social advice and support.

In relation to the mobile students, the home and the host departments have to undertake the following activities in order to comply with the formal mechanisms of the ECTS programme:

- the home institution has to calculate previous achievements, i.e. stages of the course programme successfully completed, on the basis of 60 credits annually;
- the home institution has to provide the student, or directly the host institution, a transcript of records on credits awarded prior to the study period abroad;
- the host institution has to provide an "information package" informing the students from the partner institutions, via the co-ordinators in the respective departments, about the structure of the study course, titles of the courses, and

academic time units (trimester, semester, year or any larger unit), the credit value of the course as well as the type (lecture, seminar, laboratory practical, etc.) and the content of the individual courses. This should enable students to select the courses to be taken abroad prior to the sojourn;
- the host institution has to recognise prior study and, if necessary, to adapt the achievements stated by the home institution on a transcript of records to its own system of calculating credits;
- upon completion of the study period abroad, the host institution has to provide the student - or directly the institution the student returns to (or newly goes to) - a transcript of records about his or her academic achievements during the study period abroad (again calculated on the basis of 60 credits annually for successfully completed study); and
- the institution the student returns to (or newly selects) has to accept the credits previously awarded and must transform the credits awarded for the study period abroad into its own credit system.

We can assume, that to a certain extent while the application of the rules of ECTS are not standard, they are similar for each student of the same department because of the subject-oriented organisation of the ECTS programme with its limited number of participating institutions of higher education. Therefore the institutions' refusal to apply to the ECTS rules can endanger the success of the programme to a degree proportional to the number of students which the institutions are sending or receiving. In assessing the impact and real issues surrounding the ECTS scheme in its third year, we have to take into account this problem and also the possibility that students were not well informed about the mechanisms and procedures of the programme. This lack of information may be due to the fact that the process of establishing the correspondence regarding academic achievements and credit transfer could be undertaken directly between the home and host institutions, without involving the students. By using an additional source of data, i.e. information about formal mechanisms and credit transfer provided by the institutions for each student on so-called "Technical Data Report Sheets", we are in the position to cross-check both pieces of information provided by students and departmental co-ordinators.

5.2 Transition from the Home to the Host Institution

Asked about the award of ECTS credits for their achievements at the home institution, only 23 percent of ECTS students in 1991/92 were awarded ECTS credits for their achievements at the home institution of higher education prior to the study period abroad. This small proportion of students in 1991/92 whose aca-

demic achievements prior to the period abroad were considered in terms of ECTS credits indicates not only a decrease of this practice in comparison with previous years (28 % in 1990/91 and 38 % in 1989/90) but might also possibly show a general trend in the perception of ECTS credits as beneficial for the recognition of achievements acquired abroad but not necessary or even helpful while studying at the home institution. This notwithstanding, some remarkable differences in awarding ECTS credits for achievements at home could be observed in 1991/92 by home country of ECTS students. Italian students (53%) reported most often that prior achievement was calculated in ECTS credits while only small proportions of British (3 %) and German (13 %) students received ECTS credits for their prior achievements. Because the differences by field of study were very small in this respect, we might conclude that calculation of prior achievements in terms of ECTS credits is more strongly linked to national cultures of higher education systems than to any disciplinary barriers.

Only 26 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 reported that a written statement was provided about their achievements before they went abroad (as compared to 27 % of the ECTS students 1990/91 and 31 % of the ECTS students 1989/90). Only 12 percent received a written statement reporting ECTS credits, while in 14 percent of the cases other ways of calculating credits were employed: 31 percent of students reported that they did not receive any written statement, while 42 percent did not know whether the host institution had received a written statement. Taking into account another source of information, provided by the institutional ECTS co-ordinators, in most of these cases the home departments had sent the transcripts of records directly to their host partner departments without giving any information to the students. The co-ordinators stated that 31 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 were not provided a written statement on prior achievements. This figure is identical with those of the students.

As Table 5.1 shows, the proportion of ECTS students who were not provided with such a written statement varied substantial by field of study. The respective proportions were relatively small in chemistry (16 %) and history (22 %) while more than one-third of students in medicine (38 %), mechanical engineering (37 %) and business administration (34 %) stated explicitly that no written statement on their prior achievements was provided.

About half of the German (48 %) and the Dutch (47 %) students as well as 41 percent of the Spanish students reported that they were not provided with a written statement (see Table 5.2). Smallest proportions in this respect could be observed among students from Greece (10 %), Ireland (14 %), France (17 %) and Italy (18%).

Table 5.1
Provision of Written Statement by the Home Institution on the Achievements Prior to the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Yes, in terms of 60 credits annually	10	16	18	4	17	12
Yes, in other ways of calculating credits, hours, etc.	14	10	16	14	14	14
Do not know	41	51	49	43	32	43
No	34	22	16	38	37	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(143)	(67)	(93)	(138)	(107)	(548)

Question 7.1.3: Did your home institution provide a written statement on your achievements prior to your study period 1991/92 abroad?

Table 5.2
Provision of Written Statement by the Home Institution on the Achievements Prior to the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution (percent)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Yes, in terms of 60 credits annually	19	8	14	14	12	13	20	5	17	17	3	12
Yes, in other ways of calculating credits, hours, etc.	23	7	24	27	9	27	9	5	14	11	6	14
Do not know	35	38	33	18	63	50	53	76	22	44	68	43
No	23	48	29	41	17	10	18	14	47	28	24	31
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(26)	(120)	(21)	(103)	(94)	(30)	(45)	(21)	(36)	(18)	(34)	(548)

Question 7.1.3: Did your home institution provide a written statement on your achievements prior to your study period 1991/92 abroad?

Only half of the students in 1991/92 who received or at least were informed about the provision of a written statement reported a calculation of prior achievements in terms of 60 ECTS credits per year. Although we do not know how prior achievements were calculated for the 43 percent of students who did not know whether a written statement were provided or not, we might assume that the respective figure in this sub-population will not be completely different. Obviously, these formal mechanisms of the ECTS were not well accepted by the participating institutions. This conclusion is underlined by the fact that no improvement was achieved over the years surveyed.

By and large, the proportion of students who did not know whether a transcript of records had been sent to the host institution seems to be extraordinarily high. Thus one may argue that a stronger involvement of students in the whole process of calculating and transferring ECTS credits might help the implementation of the ECTS scheme.

5.3 Course Selection

To enable the students to select the courses to be taken abroad, the host institution has to provide an "information package". This is aimed at informing the students and co-ordinators about the structure of courses, titles of courses, the content of courses, the academic level of courses and the credit value of the courses.

The information package of the host institution was made available to almost two-thirds of the ECTS students 1991/92 prior to their application (63 %). Another 12 percent received the information package before the selection, while 22 percent received it after the selection for the period abroad. Only one percent of the respondents reported that the information package was not available before the departure to the host country, and 3 percent stated that an information package was not made available at all.

Substantial differences on when the information package was made available to the ECTS students 1991/92 could be observed by field of study. About two-thirds or more of the students in chemistry (74 %), mechanical engineering (71 %), medicine (69 %) and history (67 %) received the information package of their host institution before they applied for the ECTS period abroad. The comparable proportion was only 44 percent in business administration where many students (38 %) received the package only after the selection procedure.

As Table 5.3 shows, early availability of the information package, i.e. before the application for an ECTS period abroad, was most often reported by students spending their period abroad in Portugal (100 %), the Netherlands (79 %) and Spain (72 %). Information packages on the host institution were least often available early for students spending a period abroad in the United Kingdom (53 %).

Table 5.3
Time of Availability of the Information Package Provided by the Host Institution in 1991/92, by Host Country (percent)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Before the application	69	65	60	72	64	67	68	62	79	100	53	63
Before the selection	7	9	20	12	15	17	8	12	7	0	12	12
After the selection	21	22	20	13	14	17	21	26	14	0	31	22
Not available before departure	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	1
Not available at all	0	5	0	3	5	0	2	0	0	0	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(29)	(65)	(15)	(69)	(98)	(12)	(53)	(42)	(14)	(6)	(172)	(575)

Question 2.19: When was the information package of the host institution made available to you?

Substantial differences in the timing of availability of the information package could also observed by home country of students. Three-quarters or even more of the ECTS students 1991/92 from Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands or Germany could make use of the package before they applied for the period abroad compared with only about 50 percent among Greek, British and Spanish students.

In general, the degree of satisfaction with the quality of the information package provided by the host institution was not very high (2.9). Highest ratings were given to information packages which were made available by Belgian, Greek (2.5 each) and Danish institutions (2.6) while packages provided by Portuguese (3.4), Spanish (3.2) and Italian host institutions (3.1) were assessed least favourably. The ratings by field of study did not differ substantially; they ranged from 2.8 in chemistry to 3.2 in history.

Regarding the individual aspects contained in the information packages, students were most satisfied with information on ECTS rules and on the host institution (2.3 each) as Table 5.4 shows. Above average ratings were also given to the information provided on the department and the course description (2.7 each). Least satisfaction could be noted regarding aspects related to the modes by which courses were processed, i.e. teaching methods (3.2), course level (3.3) and methods of assessment (3.3). Low satisfaction was also expressed regarding information provided on administrative matters (3.2), accommodation in the host country (3.1) and language tuition facilities (3.1).

Table 5.4
Degree of Satisfaction with the Information Package Provided by the Host Institution 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Information on ECTS rules	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.4	2.4	1.9	1.8	2.3	2.3
Information on the institution	1.9	2.6	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.3
Information on the department	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.6	2.8	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Information on registration	2.0	3.6	2.3	3.0	2.9	2.5	3.1	2.8	2.9	3.5	2.8	2.9
Information on admin. matters	2.4	3.6	2.8	3.6	3.4	2.9	3.7	3.1	2.9	4.0	2.8	3.2
Language tuition facilities	2.3	3.0	2.6	3.4	3.0	2.9	3.3	3.4	2.6	4.5	3.1	3.1
Accommodation	2.6	2.6	3.0	4.2	3.1	2.8	3.7	3.2	2.9	4.2	2.7	3.1
Information on teaching methods	2.9	3.3	2.7	3.7	3.3	2.7	3.4	3.2	2.9	4.5	2.8	3.2
Course description	2.8	2.9	2.5	2.8	2.9	1.9	2.6	2.4	3.0	3.5	2.7	2.7
Information on course level	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.8	3.5	2.8	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.3
Methods of assessment	3.5	3.2	2.8	3.5	3.4	2.7	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.3
(n)	(29)	(61)	(14)	(65)	(92)	(12)	(50)	(41)	(14)	(6)	(167)	(551)

Question 2.20: To what extent were you satisfied with the Information Package of the host institution?

* On a scale from 1 = "very satisfied" to 5 "very dissatisfied"

The ratings regarding the utility of the information for the choice of the host institution and the choice of courses were correlated with the degree of satisfaction with information provided on the host institution (pearson corr. 0.4) and the description of courses (pearson corr. 0.5). On average, the utility for choice of the host institution was rated 2.5 and that for the choice of courses, 2.4. These ratings were slightly better than those of ECTS students of previous years (2.6 on average in 1990/91 and 2.7 in 1989/90). As Table 5.5 shows, information packages made available by the host institutions from Portugal and Belgium in 1991/92 were considered as most useful for both choice of the host institution and choice of courses. Greek institutions provided information packages which were rated useful regarding the choice of the institution but less useful for choice of courses. Information packages provided by host institutions of the Netherlands, Germany and Spain were rated least useful for both choice of host institution and courses.

The assessment of the utility of the information packages for the choice of the host institution did not differ in most respects by field of study with the exception of history students who considered the information they received as not very useful for the choice of courses (3.2 as compared to 2.4 on average) because they thought the courses were poorly described.

Table 5.5
Utility of the Information Package Provided by the Host Institution in 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Information for choice of host institution	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.5	3.1	2.2	2.4	2.5
(n)	(30)	(63)	(16)	(67)	(94)	(12)	(52)	(41)	(14)	(6)	(167)	(562)
Information for choice of courses	2.1	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.2	2.6	1.8	2.4	2.4
(n)	(29)	(62)	(16)	(67)	(94)	(11)	(52)	(40)	(14)	(6)	(168)	(559)

Question 2.21: Overall, how useful do you consider the ECTS Information Package for the choice of the host institution and the choice of courses?

* On a scale from 1 = "very useful" to 5 "not useful at all"

As Table 5.6 shows, about half of the students in 1991/92 selected all courses to be taken abroad by themselves while a further third involved the departmental coordinator in the selection procedure but mainly decided themselves. Finally, 16

percent of the ECTS students stated that the departmental co-ordinator decided about the course selection himself (6 %) or made the decision after consultation with the student (10 %). The role of the departmental co-ordinator at the home institution in the original selection of courses to be taken at the host institution varied substantially by field of study. About two-thirds of the students enrolled in chemistry and mechanical engineering stated that their co-ordinators were involved in course selection compared with about half in business administration, and only one-third in history and medicine. These figures are similar to those stated by the ECTS students of the preceding year.

Table 5.6
Role of Departmental Co-ordinator in Selection of Courses 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
The departmental co-ordinator decided himself	4	1	12	4	9	6
Students involvement but co-ordinator decided predominately	12	3	10	7	18	10
Co-ordinators involvement but student decided predominately	29	26	46	31	34	33
Student selected all the courses	55	70	32	58	39	51
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(154)	(70)	(93)	(144)	(108)	(569)

Question 7.2.1: What role did the departmental co-ordinator at your home institution play in the original selection of courses to be taken at the host institution?

About 80 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 reported that their programme of study was approved either by the ECTS co-ordinator of their home institution (12 %) or the co-ordinator of the host institution (24 %) or by both the co-ordinators of the home and the host institution (44 %). A further 18 percent reported that no formal approval of the programme of study was necessary because of free choice of courses. Finally, 3 percent stated that their programme of study was not approved although in principal it had to be.

As Table 5.7 shows, the highest proportion of students who got their study programme approved prior to the departure - usually by both the co-ordinator of the home and the host institution - were in the fields of chemistry (59 %), medicine (53 %) and mechanical engineering (44 %). Approval of the study programme on arrival in the host country was most often mentioned by students in business administration (47 %), while students in history were more likely to have a free choice of courses and hence not need approval of their study programmes (39%).

Table 5.7
Approval of Study Programme by ECTS Co-ordinators 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Before departure by home and host co-ordinator	17	21	56	44	32	34
Before departure by home co-ordinator	12	10	3	3	11	8
Before departure by host co-ordinator	1	0	0	6	1	2
On arrival by home and host co-ordinator	16	10	5	2	15	10
On arrival by home co-ordinator	7	3	1	3	2	4
On arrival by host co-ordinator	24	13	26	19	23	22
No formal approval necessary	20	39	7	19	11	18
Programme of study not approved	3	3	1	2	5	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(153)	(67)	(94)	(144)	(107)	(565)

Question 7.2.2: Did you have your programme of study approved by the ECTS co-ordinators at the home institution and the host institution?

On the basis of the information packages, and partly with the help of the departmental co-ordinator at the home institution of higher education, ECTS students in 1991/92 selected on average 5.9 courses to be taken at the host institution.

Upon arrival in the host country, some differences between courses originally selected and courses actually taken could be observed. On average, students:

- were not admitted to 0.3 courses;
- did not take 0.8 courses originally selected; and
- attended 1.1 courses not originally selected.

As Table 5.8 shows, the number of courses actually taken amounts to 6.0 on average. About 27 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 reported that they were not admitted to courses at the host institution they originally had selected (as compared to 24 % of the ECTS students in 1990/91 and 12 % in 1989/90). In most of these cases, the courses originally selected turned out not to be available upon arrival at the host institution.

Table 5.8
Course Selection and Courses Actually Taken in 1991/92, by Field of Study
(mean)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Courses originally selected	6.3	4.3	5.9	5.7	6.6	5.9
Courses not admitted to	.5	.3	.2	.1	.2	.3
Courses not taken	.7	.6	.5	.7	1.2	.8
Courses originally not selected	1.1	1.4	1.1	.8	1.2	1.1
Courses actually taken	6.2	4.9	6.2	5.7	6.4	6.0
(n)	(125)	(67)	(74)	(107)	(93)	(466)

Question 7.2.3: Please state the number of courses and the number of ECTS credits originally allocated to these courses.

Some 39 percent of the students did not take at least one course which had originally been selected (as compared to 28 % in 1990/91 and 30 % in 1989/90), mostly for operational reasons, such as timetable overlap with other courses, courses starting before the student's arrival at the host institution, etc. Other important reasons for change were that the course content did not meet prior expectations or new preferences for courses had emerged in conjunction with the perceived need to reduce the number of courses to be studied at the host institution in

general. Academic and linguistic reasons played a marginal role in decisions not to take courses as originally intended. This figures are similar to those of the ECTS students of the previous years.

Table 5.9
Reasons for Taking Courses Originally not Envisaged in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent of students taking courses originally not envisaged; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business adminis tration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Fulfilled prerequisites for add. courses	10	8	18	21	7	12
Substitute for courses not admitted to	16	17	14	8	23	16
Substitute for courses dropped	15	6	12	11	24	15
Add. courses believed to be easier	14	2	0	10	17	10
Add. courses linguistically easier	11	6	6	5	1	6
Add. courses believed to be more demanding	13	33	16	18	13	17
Add courses preferable in teaching	23	10	10	31	11	18
Add. courses operation-ally advantageous	34	17	29	52	35	34
Add. courses for specialisation	32	35	31	13	30	28
Interesting theme of the course	64	58	45	42	44	52
Interesting alternative to study at home	26	29	18	15	20	22
Recommendation by host co-ordinator	18	19	35	18	24	22
Other reasons for selection	29	38	22	21	24	27
Total	304	279	255	263	272	279
(n)	(111)	(48)	(51)	(62)	(71)	(343)

Question 7.2.4: If you took courses at the host institution you did not select prior to your stay there, please state the reasons.

More than half of the ECTS students 1991/92 took one or, in a few cases, even more courses at the host institution which they, originally did not intend to take while studying abroad (45 % in 1990/91 and 55 % in 1989/90). This was true for 72 percent of students in business administration, 68 percent of students enrolled in history, 65 percent in mechanical engineering, 53 percent in chemistry and 42 percent in medicine. Courses initially not envisaged were taken mostly for positive reasons, as shown in Table 5.9:

- 52 percent of the students taking courses initially not envisaged did so because of interesting themes;
- about 42 percent believed that the courses were an interesting alternative to the study provisions at the home institution (e.g. no similar courses offered at home, or specially related to the host country), or that they fitted well into the respective area of specialisation (28 % each); and
- a considerable number of students selected new courses not originally planned for operational reasons (34 %), e.g. because they fitted well into the study period abroad or because of the timing of the course provision.

About one-sixth of the ECTS students stated that all courses abroad were academically equally demanding as the courses they would have been expected to take at their home institution. One-fifth took at least one more demanding course but no less demanding course, about a quarter did not take any more demanding but at least one less demanding course, and about one-third experienced less demanding courses as well as more demanding during their study period abroad. Some 13 percent of the students stated that more than half of the courses taken abroad were less demanding, and 6 percent stated that all the courses were less demanding.

Altogether, 28.2 percent of the courses taken abroad by ECTS students were rated as less demanding. This figure was almost identical to that of the previous year. About 50 percent of the courses were viewed as academically equally demanding and 21.1 percent were more demanding, as Table 5.10 shows.

ECTS students spending their period abroad in the United Kingdom considered the highest proportion of courses as less demanding (34 %)[1], while students going to Denmark experienced only few less demanding courses (7 %). As Table 5.11 shows, students going to Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and Germany were most likely to follow courses which were more academically demanding than the courses they would have been expected to take at their home institution.

The percentage of courses considered as academically more demanding showed most variation by home country. Most courses which were academically

[1] Because of the small number of cases the high proportion of less demanding courses experienced during the period abroad in Portugal will be ignored.

more demanding were attended by students from Greece (39 %), Denmark (36 %) and the United Kingdom (28 %). On the other hand, fewer experiences of this kind were reported by Dutch (9 %) and Belgian (13 %) students. Less demanding courses were most often experienced by Spanish (38 %) and French students (35 %).

Table 5.10
Academic Level of Courses Taken at the Host Institution in 1991/92, by Field of Study (mean of percentages stated by all students; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Percentage of courses more demanding	18.9	20.0	22.2	26.1	17.3	21.1
Percentage of courses equally demanding	49.0	50.4	52.6	52.4	49.7	50.7
Percentage of courses less demanding	32.1	29.5	25.2	21.4	33.0	28.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(n)	(151)	(70)	(91)	(136)	(106)	(554)

Question 8.1: 'Approximately what percentage of the courses which you took while abroad were academically less or more demanding than courses which you would have taken at the home institution during the same period?'

Students in business administration and mechanical engineering experienced less demanding courses more frequently and more demanding courses less frequently than students in other fields of study. The proportion of courses considered as more demanding were highest in medicine (26 %).

As Table 5.12 shows, 26 percent of the ECTS students stated that courses taken abroad were a repetition of work already covered in previous courses. This was most often stated by students in business administration (37 %) and mechanical engineering (34 %) and least often in medicine (12 %) and history (14 %). About 15 percent of the students stated that at least one of the courses taken abroad would be appropriate for an earlier year of study, and one-third reported other reasons why courses were considered as less demanding.

Table 5.11
Academic Demand of Courses Taken at the Host Institution in 1991/92, by Host Country (mean of percentages stated by all students)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Percentage of courses more demanding	19.8	22.7	35.1	23.5	18.3	12.1	21.0	21.4	24.0	18.3	20.4	21.1
Percentage of courses equally demanding	62.2	50.4	57.5	51.7	52.7	68.8	57.2	47.6	42.4	30.0	45.6	50.7
Percentage of courses less demanding	18.0	26.9	7.3	24.8	29.0	19.2	21.8	31.0	33.6	51.7	34.0	28.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(n)	(30)	(65)	(15)	(66)	(89)	(12)	(51)	(42)	(12)	(6)	(166)	(554)

Question 8.1: Approximately what percentage of the courses which you took while abroad were academically less or more demanding than courses which you would have taken at the home institution during the same period?

Table 5.12
Reasons for Considering Courses Taken in 1991/92 at the Host Institution as Academically Less / More Demanding, by Field of Study (percentages stated by all students; multiple reply possible)

	Field of study					Total
Reasons for considering courses less demanding	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Courses more or less repeated	37	14	30	12	34	26
Courses appropriate for an earlier year of study	25	18	14	5	15	15
Courses were less demanding in other respects	36	44	22	38	43	36
Not ticked	26	39	50	52	30	39
Total	123	115	116	107	121	117
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)
Reasons for considering courses more demanding						
Course load at the host inst. was heavier	26	25	14	21	21	22
Some host instit. courses were of a different type	39	25	40	47	29	38
The academic level was very high	17	10	18	11	12	14
Other reasons	10	23	13	15	15	14
Not ticked	43	51	44	42	50	45
Total	135	134	127	137	126	133
(n)	(155)	(71)	(96)	(149)	(110)	(581)

Question 8.1: Approximately what percentage of the courses which you took while abroad were academically less or more demanding than courses which you would have taken at the home institution during the same period? If (some of) the courses were less demanding, please indicate why you consider them to have been less demanding (multiple reply possible). If (some of) the courses were more demanding, please state why.

A heavier course load at the host institution was stated by 22 percent of the ECTS students 1990-91 as a reason for considering courses as academically more de-

manding. Courses which were more theoretical or more practical than those expected at the home institution were also viewed as more demanding (38 %). Medical students were most likely to find courses academically more demanding (47 %) while history students were least likely (25 %).

High academic level of courses was stated by 14 percent of the ECTS students. This was most often the case for students going to Denmark (25 %), while not one single student going to Portugal stated the high academic level of courses as reason to consider courses taken abroad as more demanding than the courses which have been expected to take at the home institution.

5.4 Procedures upon Completion of the Study Period Abroad

Upon completion of the study period abroad, 57 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 reported that they had received a transcript stating the amount of ECTS credits awarded (50 % of the ECTS students 1990/91 and 56 % of the ECTS students 1989/90); 15 percent received other types of written statements (18 % and 29 %), while 28 percent did not receive ECTS credits at the host institution (32 % and 15 %). Comparable information made available by ECTS co-ordinators looks much more positive than those of the ECTS students: according to the co-ordinators, more than 90 percent of the students in 1991/92 were awarded ECTS credits at the host institution documented by a transcript of record.

The discrepancies between the statements made by co-ordinators and students on whether a transcript of record is provided by the host institution could be explained to a certain extent by the practice of sending the transcript of records directly to the home institution of the students. Obviously, a substantial proportion of the students were not informed about the transcripts of records and its direct transfer to the home institution. It is amazing, though, that about 20 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 were awarded ECTS credits from their host institution but were not informed about it.

A considerable proportion of students stated that no ECTS credits were awarded by the host institution but that academic achievements abroad were otherwise considered equivalent. This could be found most frequently in medicine (31 %), as Table 5.13 shows and least frequently in chemistry (7 %) where most of students stated that they had received ECTS credits (88 %).

The duration of the period abroad plays an important role in whether ECTS credits and stating academic achievements were formally awarded on an transcript of records (see Table 5.14). Only 39 percent of the students staying abroad for three months reported that they received a transcript of records stating ECTS credits compared to 49 percent among students spending 4-6 months abroad and 63 percent among those spending more than half a year in the host country.

Table 5.13
Crediting of Achievements at Host Institution in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Yes, ECTS credits stated on a transcript	58	57	71	47	59	57
Yes, ECTS credits not stated on a transcript	14	24	17	8	18	15
No but achievements were otherwise considered	21	18	7	31	17	20
No	8	1	5	15	7	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(145)	(67)	(95)	(131)	(107)	(545)

Question 7.2.7: Did you receive ECTS credits from your host institution (i.e. the institution you were enrolled at during the ECTS period 1991/92) for your achievements during the ECTS period?

Table 5.14
Crediting of Achievements at Host Institution in 1991/92, by Duration of Period Abroad (percent)

	Duration of period abroad				Total
	Up to 3 months	4-6 months and more	7-12	13 months and more	
Yes, ECTS credits stated on a transcript	39	49	63	65	58
Yes, ECTS credits not stated on a transcript	6	20	13	29	15
No but achievements were otherwise considered	36	21	18	6	20
No	18	10	6	0	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(33)	(157)	(333)	(17)	(540)

Question 7.2.7: Did you receive ECTS credits from your host institution (i.e. the institution you were enrolled at during the ECTS period 1991/92) for your achievements during the ECTS period?

We assume that students spending a longer period abroad, i.e. periods of more than half a year, are better informed about the ECTS credits system in general and particularly about the allocation and award of ECTS credits. On the other hand, specific procedures between home and host institution not known to the students, may be implemented in the case of short study periods of up to half a year.

5.5 Problems Students Face Regarding Credit Transfer

As discussed in Chapter 4, students were asked to state the extent to which they had significant problems with regard to various aspects of their study period abroad. Although matters of credit transfer were not the major problem mentioned by ECTS students 1991/92, they were also very far from reducing in size. Actually, 17 percent reported serious problems of this kind (1 and 2 on a scale from 1 = "very serious" to 5 = "no problems at all"), compared with 18 percent (1990/91) and 25 percent (1989/90) of the ECTS students in previous years. Again, it is surprising to note that a high proportion of students (who were obviously not well informed about the formal procedures and the award of credits) did not perceive any major problems in this respect. The awarding of credits and credit transfer appears to have been organised in 1991/92 on an informal basis between participating institutions, similar to the methods used in earlier years.

6

Credit Transfer, Recognition, and Academic Impacts

6.1 Credits Awarded by Home and Host Institution

As already mentioned in Chapter 5, only 23 percent of the 1991/92 ECTS students stated that they were awarded credits in ECTS terms for their achievements at the home institution of higher education prior to the study period abroad. In addition, some institutions calculate credits and inform their partner institutions respectively, but not their own students.

Of those students who were awarded credits according to the ECTS scheme (23%), 80 percent earned 60 credits (or more) per year.[1] On average 57.5 credits per year were awarded: the average annual number of credits was 60.4 in chemistry, 58.9 in business administration, 58.1 in mechanical engineering, 55.3 in medicine and only 51.4 in history.

ECTS students were asked how many of their prior achievements implicitly or explicitly were accepted by the host institution in terms of placement in courses at the host institution. However, only about two-thirds of the ECTS students responded to the question and whether the remaining third did not know the extent of acceptance of their prior achievements by the host institution or simply refused to answer the question for various reasons could not be clearly determined. Of the ECTS students responding in 1991/92, 82 percent stated that all their prior achievements were accepted (as compared to 81 % of ECTS students in 1990/91 and 85 % of ECTS students in 1989/90), as Table 6.1 shows. In 8 percent of the cases, prior achievements were not accepted at all. Non-acceptance of prior achievements had obviously not resulted in non-admittance of students or im-

[1] A comparison of these figures with those of the previous years is not possible because the translation of the question in some of the European languages were not done correctly in the first and second survey.

posed a limitation on the academic level of courses in which the students participated. On average, 89 percent of prior achievements were accepted: 93 percent in mechanical engineering, 90 percent in chemistry, 89 percent in business administration and 88 percent in medicine as compared to 81 percent in history. Irish (58 %) and British students (70 %) reported less often than those from other countries that their prior achievements were accepted. Regarding host country, the highest ratio of acceptance by the host institutions was reported by students going to Denmark, Greece (100 % each), the Netherlands (99 %) and the United Kingdom (95 %) while the lowest acceptance of prior achievements was reported by students going to Italy and Ireland (77 % each).

Table 6.1
Percent of Prior Achievements Accepted by the Host Institution in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
None	6	15	5	11	5	8
1 - 24 %	0	2	0	0	1	1
25 - 49 %	2	0	3	0	0	1
50 - 74 %	5	4	5	2	0	3
75 - 99 %	9	6	1	2	6	5
100 %	78	72	85	85	88	82
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(94)	(47)	(73)	(97)	(82)	(393)
Average	88.5	80.7	89.6	87.6	93.0	88.5

Question 7.1.4: How many of your prior achievements were implicitly or explicitly accepted by the host institution, in terms of placement in courses at the host institution?

The extent to which prior achievements at the home institution were accepted by the host institution did not appear to depend on the home institution's way of calculating those prior achievements (in ECTS credit terms, other credit terms or not according to credits).

In response to a question about the courses taken abroad, 70 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 indicated the number of credits originally allocated to

these courses (as compared to 60% in the preceding year and 70 % in 1989/90) while a further 20 percent of the students listed courses but did not know the number of credits originally allocated to them. About 64 percent of the 1991/92 ECTS students stated the number of credits actually awarded by the host institution: 28 percent reported that they had not received any ECTS credits, and 8 percent did not provide any information on the number of credits awarded by the host institution. As already mentioned in Chapter 5, the proportion of students awarded ECTS credits at the host institution was more than 90 percent according to the ECTS co-ordinators. In confining our subsequent analysis only to those students who provided complete information, i.e. both on the number of credits originally allocated and those actually awarded, we note that ECTS students in 1991/92 were allocated, on average, 45.8 credits for their actual study in the host country.

Table 6.2
Credits for Courses Taken at the Host Institution in 1991/92, by Field of Study (mean of students providing complete information)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Credits originally allocated	42.2	51.0	46.8	40.9	49.3	45.8
Credits awarded for other activities	.8	1.0	1.6	.0	.4	.8
Credits failed to achieve	2.6	2.0	1.1	1.3	2.5	2.0
Credits actually awarded	40.4	49.9	47.1	39.8	47.1	44.6
(n)	(92)	(49)	(76)	(54)	(74)	(345)

Question 7.2.8: If yes, please state the number of credits you received:

As Table 6.2 indicates, two ECTS credits were lost on average because students failed examinations or did not complete courses. On the other hand, .8 credits were awarded additionally - on average - for activities outside the regular course programme (language courses etc.). This resulted in an average overall award of 44.6 credits corresponding to 96 percent of the course load of 46.6 credits originally allocated and additionally taken. In comparison to the respective figures of the previous years (89 % in 1990/91 and 92 % in 1989/90), the loss of ECTS credits was lowest in 1991/92. Students in mechanical engineering (20 %) and business administration (19 %) reported most often that they lost credits because

courses were not completed or examinations failed. Among students in medicine the respective proportion was smallest (7 %).

The award of credits for other activities than the regular course programme was mentioned by only 5 percent of the students. It ranged from 1 percent in medicine to 8 percent in chemistry. No significant differences in this respect could be observed according to the host countries.

Information, provided by the participating institutions on a "Technical Data Sheet Form" for each student, shows an almost identical figure regarding the credits allocated to the approved study programme prior to the period abroad (about 44 ECTS credits). In contrast, ECTS co-ordinators reported a smaller number of ECTS credits awarded by the host institution (39 as compared to 44.6 stated by the students), constituting a loss of about 10 percent. This discrepancy may be due to a variety of reasons the most likely being non-responses by students who were not very successful during their period abroad.

Table 6.3
Number of Credits Received at Host Institution in 1991/92, Calculated per Year in ECTS Terms, by Field of Study (percent and mean of students being awarded credits in ECTS terms)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Less than 30	3	10	3	5	8	5
Less than 60	31	10	20	37	33	27
60	39	66	60	47	44	50
More than 60	27	15	17	12	15	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(67)	(41)	(65)	(43)	(66)	(282)
Average	56.6	57.3	58.8	55.6	56.2	56.9

Question 7.2.8: If yes, please state the number of credits you received.

In a further question, ECTS students were asked to state the total number of credits actually awarded by the host institution as well as the period of study these referred to. This made it possible to calculate the average number of credits granted to students responding to this question, compared to the norm of 60 ECTS credits per year. As Table 6.3 indicates, 18 percent (17 % according to the reports by the

institutions) of the ECTS students were awarded more than 60 credits per year and 50 percent (31 %) exactly 60 credits; 32 percent (52 %) were awarded less than 60 credits, among them 5 percent (17 %) less than 30 credits. The average number of credits received per year was 56.9 (50.0), i.e. 95 percent (83 %) of the ECTS norm of 60 per year. It was 59 (as compared to 59 stated by co-ordinators) in chemistry, 57 each in business administration (46) and history (51), and 56 each in medicine (46) and in mechanical engineering (47). We have to bear in mind that calculations about the amount of credits received were based on the statements of less than half of the ECTS students in 1990/91. The other half of the students were excluded from the calculation for various reasons: about 28 percent explicitly declared that they did not receive credits from the host institution and a further 23 percent did not provide the information needed for the calculation of the normalised amount of credits received. The figures provided by the institutions suggest that the respective figures of the respondents to the questionnaire would be less favourable if complete information was available.

6.2 Degree of Credit Transfer, Correspondence of Achievements and Prolongation

Upon completion of the ECTS period abroad most of the students in 1991/92 returned to their home institution (83 %). Only a few students stayed at the host institution (3 %) or went to a third institution of higher education (5 %) while about nine percent completed their studies during the period abroad or decided to break up the study programme after the period abroad. With one exception, there were no remarkable differences on how study was resumed after the period abroad according to field of study; only students in chemistry returned less often to their home institution (67%), and subsequently a higher than average proportion went on to a third institution of higher education (14 %) or completed their studies (17 %).

As Table 6.4 shows, 77 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 responding to this question (53 % of all students surveyed) stated that all of the credits awarded abroad were transferred (or were likely to be transferred) to the institution of higher education in which they were enrolled in the subsequent year, i.e. in most cases (83 %) the home institution of higher education: the credits thus transferred were accepted (or likely to be accepted) by that institution. The average number of credits transferred corresponds to 91 percent of the credits awarded by the host institution of higher education (see Chart 6.1), slightly less than the 95 percent degree of credit transfer reported by ECTS students in the preceding years. Almost all of the credits were transferred in 1991/92 in chemistry (96 %), history (94 %),

and medicine (93 %) while 10 percent in mechanical engineering and 13 percent in business administration were not transferred.

Table 6.4
Credit Transfer from Host Institution to Students' Current Institution in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent and mean of students being awarded credits for their achievements at the host institution)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
100 % and more	68	83	91	75	75	77
75 % - 99 %	15	7	4	15	9	11
50 % - 74 %	4	7	0	6	10	6
25 % - 49 %	5	0	2	2	3	3
less than 25 %	7	2	2	2	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(73)	(41)	(45)	(48)	(69)	(276)
Average	86.7	94.2	95.6	92.6	90.3	91.2

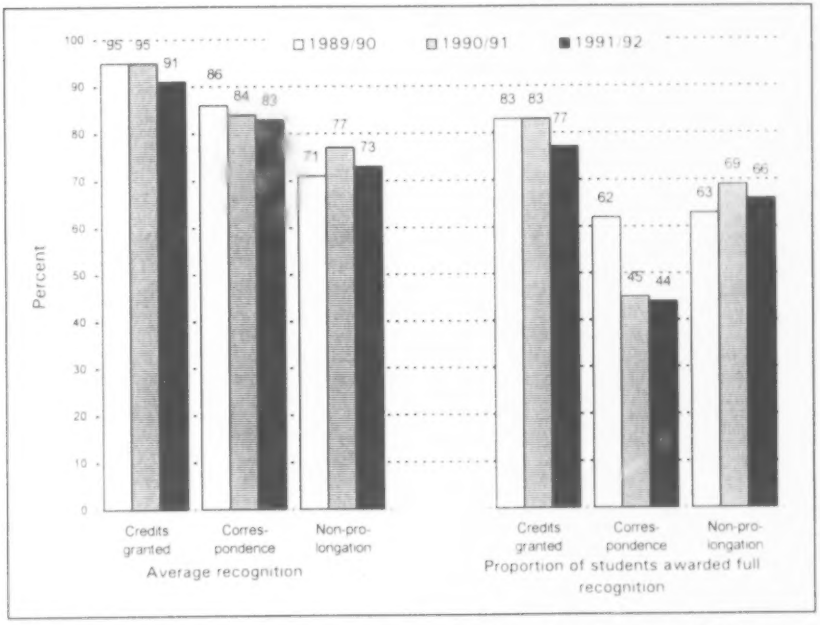
Question 7.3.2: How many of the ECTS credits mentioned in response to question 7.2.8 were transferred to (accepted by) the institution in which you are currently enrolled?

According to the information provided by the participating institutions regarding the recognition of ECTS credits awarded by the host institution, 12 percent of the students did not receive full recognition, 80 percent had all credits awarded recognised and 8 percent had more credits recognised than had been awarded at the host institution. Thus, the average number of credits recognised corresponds to 100 percent of the credits awarded at the host institution. This calculation, based on information of about 90 percent of all 1991/92 ECTS students indicates the variety of procedures regarding ECTS credits awarded by the host institution.

The ratio of 91 percent credit transfer reported by the ECTS students is impressive in comparison to the "degree of recognition" in the case of the ICP students in 1990/91 (74 % for all ICP students). One has to bear in mind, however, that only 53 percent of the ECTS students had responded to the respective questions (84 % of the ICP students), notably those who were informed about the calculation of academic achievements in ECTS credits. Nonetheless, if we take into account both, information provided by ECTS students and co-ordinators, there is no doubt

that the ECTS programme contributes successfully to the recognition of academic achievements gathered through the study period abroad.

Chart 6.1
Average Recognition According to Different Criteria, by Academic Year
(percent)



Question 7.3.2: How many of the ECTS credits mentioned in response to question 7.2.8 were transferred to (accepted by) the institution in which you are currently enrolled?

Question 7.3.4: To what extent did your successfully completed academic study at the host institution (credited or otherwise recognised by the host institution) correspond to the amount of typical study in a corresponding period at the institution in which you were enrolled immediately prior to the ECTS study period 1991/92?

Question 7.3.8: The ECTS study period 1991/92 is likely to prolong the total duration of your study by:

Most of the students in 1991/92 who reported that not all ECTS credits were transferred or that achievements during the study period abroad were not fully recognised in other ways, continued their study at the home institution at a level corresponding to full credits transfer or did not perceive any consequences (67%)

from the non-recognition or incomplete transfer of credits. Only 19 percent stated that they were placed at the institution currently enrolled at a lower level; this proportion reporting this outcome ranged from 5 percent in history to 29 percent in medicine.

Seven percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 stated that they repeated an examination at the home institution which they had already passed successfully at the host institution. In most of these cases, this was required by the home institution, while in some cases students themselves wished to repeat. The largest proportion of students repeating an examination already passed successfully at the host institution could be found among students in medicine (16 %) and the smallest in history (1 %).

As Table 6.5 indicates, 44 percent of ECTS students responding to this question (78 % of all students surveyed) stated that the successfully completed academic study at the host institution (credited or otherwise recognised by the host institution) corresponded to a similar amount of typical study in a corresponding period at the institution in which they were enrolled prior to the ECTS study period abroad (as compared to 45 % of the ECTS students 1990/91 and to 62 % of the ECTS students 1989/90). On average, successful study abroad credited - or otherwise recognised - corresponded to 83 percent (84 % in 1990/91 and 86 % in 1989/90) of that typically expected in a corresponding period at home: 90 percent in chemistry, 88 percent in medicine, 83 percent in mechanical engineering, 82 percent in history and 76 percent in business administration. An 83 percent "degree of correspondence" of ECTS students' successful study abroad in comparison to study typically expected at home compares favourably with the 72 percent reported by the ICP students of the preceding year.

The correspondence of successful study abroad to the typical amount of study at home was slightly lower than we had expected. Taking into account that students were awarded, on average, 95 percent of the 60 ECTS credits norm per year and that 91 percent of these ECTS credits were recognised, we could expect a 86 percent correspondence of the work load abroad to that at home instead of the 83 percent actually reported (as compared to 84 % in 1990/91 and 86 % in 1989/90). It can be shown, however, that those students who were awarded credit in the "currency" of ECTS credits, i.e. those providing information about allocation, award and recognition of ECTS credits, stated a slightly higher correspondence of work load abroad compared to that at the home institution (85 %) than other students (81 %).

Finally, 40 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 stated that the study abroad period was most likely to prolong the total duration of study (as compared to 31 % of the ECTS students 1990/91 and 37 % of the ECTS students 1989/90). It should be noted that the proportion of students expecting a prolongation of their overall study period is somewhat lower than the proportion of students who either

stated that they did not reach the norm of 60 ECTS credits per year or were not given full recognition (48 %). One possible reason for this finding could be that study components taken abroad which were not granted by the host institution or not recognised by the home institution were, in some cases, not a necessary or mandatory part of the study programme at home. On the other hand, students might expect that shortly after their period abroad, they would be able to "catch-up" during further study at the home institution and therefore did not expect any prolongation.

Table 6.5
Correspondence of Successfully Completed Academic Study at Host Institution to the Amount of Typical Study in a Corresponding Period at Institution Enrolled in Prior to Study Abroad in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent and mean of students being awarded credits abroad)

	Field of study					Total
	Business adminis-tration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
0 %	0	2	0	0	0	0
1 - 49 %	12	11	9	9	5	9
50 - 99 %	57	38	38	39	54	46
100 %	31	49	54	51	40	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(114)	(61)	(69)	(117)	(94)	(455)
Average	75.9	82.3	90.1	87.6	82.8	83.3

Question 7.3.4: To what extent did your successfully completed academic study at the host institution (credited or otherwise recognised by the host institution) correspond to the amount of typical study in a corresponding period at the institution in which you were enrolled immediately prior to the ECTS study period 1991/92?

The average prolongation of the total duration of their study expected by ECTS students 1991/92 was 2.3 months, i.e. 27 percent of the period actually spent abroad (as compared to 23 % in 1990/91 and 29 % in 1989/90), as Table 6.6 shows. In contrast, the comparable prolongation expected was about 46 percent for the ICP students 1990/91.

Table 6.6
Ratio of Prolongation to the Duration of the Study Period Abroad Due to ECTS Study Period in 1991/92, by Field of Study (percent and mean)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
None	76	61	61	58	71	66
Less than 50 %	1	2	6	2	1	2
50 - 74 %	6	10	7	24	17	13
75 - 99 %	1	0	4	4	0	2
100 % and more	16	28	21	13	11	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(119)	(61)	(67)	(119)	(89)	(455)
Average	23.3	33.3	30.2	29.1	20.0	26.5

Question 7.3.8: The ECTS study period 1991/92 is likely to prolong the total duration of your study by

Least prolongation was expected by students in mechanical engineering (20 %) and business administration (23 %), while the expected prolongation in history (33 %), chemistry (30 %) and medicine (29 %) was above average.

Prolongation was expected, in particular, by Greek (58 % of the duration of the study period abroad), Dutch (51 %) and German students (44 %). A substantial number of students from Greece (50 %) and the Netherlands (37 %) stated that the prolongation they expected was as long, or longer, than the duration of their period abroad. Least prolongation was reported by Irish, Danish, French and Belgian students (they expected only about 4 to 9 % prolongation).

Surprisingly, students who stated that they were not awarded ECTS credits by the host institution or that their academic achievements abroad were otherwise considered as equivalent, did not expect a higher level of prolongation on average than those awarded ECTS credits. Again, we cannot be certain whether these students really were not awarded ECTS credits or they were simply not informed by the home and the host institution.

6.3 Self-Rating of Academic Progress

ECTS students in 1991/92 rated their academic progress abroad more positively than academic progress during a corresponding period at the home institution. The average ratings were 2.6 on a scale from 1 = "much better" to 5 = "much less" (slightly better than the ratings of 2.7 of ECTS students of the previous years). Those ECTS students rating academic progress abroad negatively most often stated problems due to differences of course content and different modes of teaching, learning and assessment. As Table 6.7 shows, ECTS students enrolled in mechanical engineering (2.9) rated academic progress abroad less favourably than students in the other fields of study (2.5 and 2.6).

Table 6.7
Academic Progress in 1991/92 Abroad, by Field of Study (percent and mean*)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Much better (1)	21	17	20	21	10	18
2	25	33	32	28	29	29
Same (3)	26	32	26	26	30	27
4	23	14	20	20	26	21
Much less (5)	5	3	2	5	5	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(153)	(69)	(96)	(148)	(107)	(573)
Average	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.6

Question 8.5: How would you rate your general academic progress during your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, compared with what you would have expected in a corresponding period at the institution in which you were enrolled immediately prior to that period?

* On a scale from 1 = "much better" to 5 "much less"

Academic progress abroad was rated highest by students who spent their study period abroad in Denmark (1.9) and the United Kingdom (2.4), while it was rated lowest by students going to Portugal (3.2), Spain (3.0) and France (2.9). One should bear in mind, though, that the number of students going to some of these countries was very low. Thus, random effects cannot be excluded. It was somewhat surprising that the academic progress students reached in the United Kingdom was above average although a relatively high proportion of courses attended

during the period abroad were rated as academically less demanding than courses students had expected to take at the home institution.

As regards home country, Greek, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese students rated academic progress abroad most highly (see Table 6.8). Also ICP students from southern European countries seemed to consider the quality of higher education abroad somewhat higher than in their home country.

Table 6.8
Academic Progress Abroad in 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution of Higher Education (percent and mean*)

	Country of home institution											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Much better (1)	7	14	22	29	15	33	20	0	15	17	16	18
2	15	29	26	36	26	33	37	10	21	39	27	29
Same (3)	56	27	17	17	29	23	28	48	33	33	22	27
4	22	21	26	17	25	10	11	29	28	11	35	21
Much less (5)	0	9	9	1	4	0	4	14	3	0	0	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(n)	(27)	(126)	(23)	(111)	(95)	(30)	(46)	(21)	(39)	(18)	(37)	(573)
Average	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.8	2.1	2.4	3.5	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.6

Question 8.5: How would you rate your general academic progress during your ECTS study period 1991/92 abroad, compared with what you would have expected in a corresponding period at the institution in which you were enrolled immediately prior to that period?

* On a scale from 1 = "much better" to 5 "much less"

7

Achievements and Assessment of the Study Period Abroad

7.1 Improvement of Foreign Language Proficiency

As already stated in Chapter 2, proficiency in the host country language was one of the students' major motives in selecting their host institution. In addition, some departments provided courses not in the host country language, but in another language in which the incoming students were more proficient. Therefore, one could expect that the proficiency in the language of instruction was already relatively high prior to the study period abroad.

ECTS students were asked, after their period abroad, to rate their proficiency in the (major) language of instruction at the host institution prior to and after the study period. They were expected to undertake a self-assessment of their reading, listening, speaking, and writing proficiency, both in academic settings as well as outside the classroom, each on a scale from 1 = "very good" to 7 = "extremely limited". As Table 7.1 shows, students in 1991/92 rated their prior language proficiency on average between 3.8 and 4.7, with proficiency in academic settings rated only slightly inferior to proficiency outside classroom. Prior to the study period abroad, students considered their reading proficiency about half a scale point better than active proficiency, i.e. speaking and writing. Listening proficiency was also considered on a lower level than reading proficiency. ECTS students 1991/92 rated their prior language competence slightly better (4.3 on average of all eight ratings) than ECTS students 1990/91 (4.4), but slightly worse than ECTS students 1989/90 (4.1).

ECTS students in 1991/92 going to the United Kingdom (3.8 on average of all eight ratings), Ireland (4.0) and Greece (4.0) rated their language proficiency prior to the study period abroad highest, while those going to Portugal (6.7) and Den-

Table 7.1
Self-Rating of Competency in Language of Instruction Abroad Prior to and After the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

		Host country										Total
		B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Reading in academic setting	prior	4.1	4.5	5.1	4.0	3.7	3.9	4.9	3.6	4.6	6.7	3.3	3.9
	after	1.7	2.1	2.3	1.5	1.8	2.9	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.5	1.6	1.8
Listening in academic setting	prior	4.9	4.7	5.9	4.5	4.3	4.1	5.2	4.1	4.9	7.0	4.0	4.5
	after	1.8	2.0	2.4	1.7	1.9	2.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	3.5	1.8	1.9
Speaking in academic setting	prior	5.1	4.9	6.1	4.6	4.6	4.3	5.5	4.7	5.1	7.0	4.3	4.7
	after	2.4	2.5	2.9	2.1	2.2	2.9	2.4	2.3	2.7	3.7	2.2	2.3
Writing in academic setting	prior	5.5	4.9	6.1	4.7	4.7	4.3	5.6	4.2	5.4	7.0	4.0	4.7
	after	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.2	2.7	3.2	2.7	2.3	3.1	4.0	2.2	2.5
Reading outside classroom	prior	4.0	4.0	5.2	3.9	3.6	3.6	4.5	3.4	4.6	6.2	3.4	3.8
	after	2.0	2.1	2.4	1.5	1.7	2.6	2.1	1.8	1.9	2.7	1.8	1.9
Listening outside classroom	prior	4.2	4.0	5.7	4.2	4.0	3.8	4.6	4.0	4.8	6.7	3.8	4.1
	after	1.9	1.8	2.5	1.5	1.7	2.4	1.9	1.9	1.8	2.8	1.9	1.8
Speaking outside classroom	prior	4.7	4.1	6.0	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.9	4.2	5.0	6.7	4.1	4.3
	after	2.1	1.8	2.7	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.8	1.9	1.9
Writing outside classroom	prior	5.0	4.3	6.0	4.4	4.3	3.8	5.1	3.9	5.4	6.7	3.9	4.3
	after	2.6	2.4	3.2	2.0	2.3	2.9	2.4	2.1	3.1	3.3	2.1	2.3
(n)		(27)	(65)	(14)	(68)	(94)	(10)	(51)	(39)	(14)	(6)	(167)	(555)

Question 4.8: How do you rate your competence in the (major) language of instruction at the host institution (reply only if different from the language of instruction at your home institution)?

* On a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 "extremely limited"

mark (5.8) rated it lowest. In general, we note that prior language proficiency was more highly rated the more common the language of instruction was in Europe. The relatively high rating of prior language proficiency of students spending a period abroad in Greece could be explained to a certain extent by the considerable proportion of Greek natives among those students (17 %).

On the other hand, prior language proficiency did not differ substantially according to the home country of the students. As in the preceding years, ECTS students enrolled in 1991/92 in business administration rated their language proficiency prior to the period abroad highest (3.8) and students in mechanical engineering lowest (4.9).

Table 7.2
Self rating of Competence in (Major) Language of Instruction Prior to and After the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Duration of Period Abroad (mean*)

		Duration of period abroad				Total
		Up to 3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	13 months and more	
Reading in academic setting	prior	3.6	4.0	3.9	4.4	3.9
	after	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8
Listening in academic setting	prior	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.5
	after	2.8	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9
Speaking in academic setting	prior	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.5	4.8
	after	2.9	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.3
Writing in academic setting	prior	4.3	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7
	after	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.5
Reading outside classroom	prior	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8
	after	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.9
Listening outside classroom	prior	3.9	4.2	4.2	3.6	4.1
	after	2.3	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.8
Speaking outside classroom	prior	4.1	4.4	4.3	3.8	4.3
	after	2.4	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.9
Writing outside classroom	prior	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.3
	after	2.7	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3

Question 4.8: How do you rate your competence in the (major) language of instruction at the host institution (reply only if different from the language of instruction at your home institution)?

* On a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 "extremely limited"

It is obviously a surprising finding that students preparing themselves linguistically for the study period abroad rated their prior proficiency in the language of instruction abroad less favourably than those not undertaking foreign language preparation (4.5 as compared to 3.5). As it is certainly not appropriate to assume that preparation led to a deterioration of proficiency, this finding seems to be mainly due to strong efforts for improvement of foreign language proficiency on the part of students starting off from a very low level. In addition, participation in foreign language preparation might have led to a more self-critical appraisal of the foreign language proficiency.

The study abroad period proved to be effective in raising the level of foreign language proficiency to a substantial extent. The ratings upon return were on average about two points more favourable on the seven-point scale. Speaking and writing proficiency remained somewhat less highly rated than listening and reading proficiency, but improved to about the same extent. Speaking proficiency in an academic context (2.3) remained more cautiously assessed than speaking proficiency outside the classroom (1.9), as Table 7.2 shows.

Language proficiency after the study period abroad varied less by host country than it did before the study period abroad. Students who spent the study period in Portugal, Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands stated the largest improvement in this respect. Also a relatively large improvement were reported by students staying abroad in Spain and Belgium.

Students spending three months abroad improved their foreign language proficiency on average only 1.5 points on the seven-point scale. Those going abroad for 4-6 months improved 2.2 points, and those going abroad for 7-12 months 2.3 points. Similar figures regarding the development of language proficiency through the period abroad could be observed in each ECTS and ICP cohort surveyed.

7.2 Knowledge about the Host Country

Study in another country can also be expected to improve the knowledge of the host country. Asked to rate their knowledge on 13 aspects of the host country notably its politics, culture and society, economic system and geography as well as the higher education system (on a scale from 1 = "extensive knowledge" to 5 = "minimal knowledge"), ECTS students in 1991/92 admitted to a relatively low level of knowledge of the host country prior to the study period. The ratings were similar to those of the ICP students in 1990/91 and the ECTS students of the preceding years.

It was surprising to note that prior knowledge about the system of higher education in the host country was lowest, together with knowledge about the treatment of immigrants. Again, it may be that the students rated prior knowledge very

low retrospectively, because they gained more insight on higher education than on many other areas of the host country during their study period abroad.

In general, prior knowledge of the "smaller" countries of the European Community was more limited, as Table 7.3 shows. As regards field of study, we note that students were better informed on those aspects of the host country closely related to their field of expertise, such as students of history on political and cultural issues or business students on the economic system of the host country.

Upon return from the study abroad period, students rated their knowledge of the host country much higher. The average score of 2.2 indicates an average improvement of 1.5 points on the five-point scale. The largest improvement was reported regarding the system of higher education (2.1) and above-average improvement regarding cultural and social issues, while knowledge on political issues, such as foreign policy in general or policy towards the own country, and knowledge about the economic system of the host country increased to a lesser extent.

The improvement in knowledge of the host country was strongly related to the duration of the study period abroad. It increased from 1.1 on the five-point scale if the study period was three months, to 1.3 for a half year period and to 1.5 if the study period was 7 months or longer. Because prior knowledge was assessed at a similar level by students going abroad for 3 months, 4-6 months or even longer, the knowledge about the host country after the period abroad also increased with the length of the stay abroad. It ranged from 2.5 if students spent 3 months abroad to 2.1 for students staying abroad more than half a year.

Regarding host country, above-average improvement in knowledge was reported by students going to "small" EC countries, about which relatively little was known prior to the study period abroad. If we aggregate the responses to the various aspects, we note the greatest improvement in knowledge reported by students going to Portugal, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands there was also an above average improvement of knowledge were reported by ECTS students staying for a period in Spain.

Respondents who stayed for a period abroad in Greece rated both their prior knowledge about the host country and their prior language competence higher than ECTS students going to other host countries. The improvement in their knowledge turned out to be relatively modest.

Knowledge on the different host countries continued to vary substantially from country to country after the study period abroad, as Table 7.3 indicates with those spending a study period in Belgium, France and the Netherlands feeling least knowledgeable about the host country. By and large, the improvement of knowledge about the host country was similar for all ICP and ECTS students surveyed since 1989.

Table 7.3
Self-rating of Knowledge About Host Country Prior to and After the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Host country (mean*)

		Host country										Total
		B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Political system and institutions	prior	4.3	3.7	4.3	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.8	4.3	4.1	4.5	3.5	3.8
	after	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.3	2.4
Dominant political issues	prior	4.2	3.7	4.4	4.2	3.8	3.5	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.8	3.7	3.9
	after	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.3	3.1	2.3	2.3	2.4
Foreign policy in general	prior	4.2	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.7	4.2	4.1	4.7	3.5	3.7
	after	2.8	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.6
Policy towards your own country	prior	4.1	3.5	3.9	3.9	3.3	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.5	3.3	3.6
	after	2.7	2.7	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.7	2.7	3.0	2.8	2.4	2.6
System of higher education	prior	4.2	3.7	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.5	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.5	3.9	4.0
	after	2.0	1.7	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9
Cultural life (art, music, theatre, etc.)	prior	4.1	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.9	4.1	4.3	3.5	3.5
	after	2.1	2.3	1.9	1.7	2.1	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.0
Dominant social issues	prior	4.2	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.8	3.7	3.8
	after	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.4	1.9	2.2	1.9	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.2
Economic system	prior	3.9	3.4	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.3	3.5	3.6
	after	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.8	2.3	2.5	2.2	3.2	2.8	2.3	2.5
The country's geography	prior	3.3	3.0	3.6	3.2	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.8	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.2
	after	1.6	2.0	1.9	1.6	2.0	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.8
Social structure (family class system)	prior	3.9	3.3	4.0	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.9	4.0	4.2	3.6	3.5
	after	2.3	2.3	2.1	1.7	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.6	2.0	2.0

(to be cont.)

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(Table 7.3 cont.)

		Host country										Total
		B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Customs, traditions, religion	prior	3.9	3.2	4.1	3.4	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.6	4.0	4.2	3.5	3.4
	after	2.2	2.1	2.3	1.7	2.1	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.0	2.0
Treatment of recently arrived immigrants	prior	4.5	3.6	4.2	4.2	3.7	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.1	4.0
	after	2.7	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.9	1.9	2.2	2.6	2.5
Sports, leisure/recreational activities	prior	4.3	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.6
	after	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.2
(n)		(31)	(65)	(16)	(69)	(96)	(12)	(53)	(42)	(14)	(6)	(169)	(573)

Question 8.3: How would you rate your level of knowledge with regard to the following aspects of the host country, immediately before you went abroad and now?

* On a scale from 1 = "extensive knowledge" to 5 "very minimal knowledge"

7.3 Opinions of Culture and Society

With respect to ten aspects, such as foreign policy, cultural life, and the higher education system, ECTS students were asked to rate their opinions of the host country and of the home country both immediately before and after the study period abroad. Again a five-point scale was applied from 1 = "highly positive" to 5 = "highly negative".

ECTS students' opinions of both the host and the home country were 2.9 on average both before and after the study abroad period. This shows that opinions on the home and host country were balanced. It also shows that the study period abroad did not lead on average to substantial changes of opinion on the host or the home country. The opinions on both the home and host countries expressed by ECTS students in 1991/92 were on average very similar to those expressed by ICP students and ECTS students of the previous years.

This does not mean, however, that opinions remained identical since 60 percent of the scores on the host country changed over time and as many as 33 percent of the ratings on the home country also changed. In view of the fact that most students had spent almost all their life in the country of the home institution of higher education, the latter proportion might be considered to be remarkably high. Looking at the replies for both home and host country, most changes of attitudes took place regarding the system of higher education.

Opinions on the respective host countries varied substantially across the range of aspects students were asked to consider, as Table 7.4 show. On average, opinions on culture, customs and traditions as well as on the urban life of the host country became more favourable, while opinions on host country's policies were almost identical upon return. Altogether, positive changes of attitudes were reported most often by students who spent their study period abroad in Denmark, Ireland and Spain, while changes in the negative direction were most frequent among students who went to Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. In looking at individual countries and aspects, we note for example that among the four major host countries for ECTS students, German higher education was, on average, more positively assessed than British, French, and finally Spanish higher education. The differences in this respect were larger after the study period abroad than prior to it. Spanish and Greek cultural life was most highly appreciated after the study period abroad.

Looking at the information by country of the home institution of higher education, we note that Dutch and Danish students expressed the most positive opinion about their home country both before and after the study period abroad. On the other hand, Italian, British, Spain and German students viewed their home country least favourably both before and after the study period, as Table 7.5 shows.

Table 7.4
Opinions About Host Country Prior to and After the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

		Host country										Total
		B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Higher education	prior	2.6	2.3	2.3	3.1	2.6	3.4	2.9	2.8	2.3	3.7	2.3	2.6
	after	2.4	2.2	2.1	3.0	2.8	2.3	2.8	2.4	2.2	3.0	2.4	2.5
Foreign policy	prior	2.9	3.2	2.6	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.3	3.5	3.3	3.2
	after	2.8	3.0	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.7	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.3	3.0
Cultural life	prior	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.5	2.0	3.3	2.7	2.5
	after	2.0	2.3	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.1
Media	prior	2.5	2.8	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.5	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.3	2.8	2.9
	after	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.4	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.7	2.8	2.8
Customs and traditions	prior	2.9	2.8	3.1	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.5	3.0	2.9	2.7
	after	2.5	2.6	2.3	1.9	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.3
Treatment of recently arrived immigrants	prior	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.2	2.7	2.4	3.5	3.2	3.3
	after	3.4	3.7	2.9	3.4	3.6	2.9	3.5	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.8	3.3
Social structure	prior	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.0
	after	3.1	3.0	2.5	2.8	3.0	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.2	3.2	2.9
Urban life	prior	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.6	2.9	2.7	3.2	2.0	2.8	2.9	2.8
	after	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.4	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.7
Government domestic policies	prior	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.7	3.6	2.5	3.0	3.4	3.3
	after	3.7	3.0	2.6	3.1	3.1	2.8	4.1	3.2	2.3	3.8	3.5	3.3
Environmental policies	prior	3.3	2.2	2.6	3.9	3.5	3.4	3.9	3.3	2.2	4.5	3.1	3.2
	after	3.3	1.9	1.9	4.3	3.6	2.9	4.2	3.5	2.5	5.0	3.1	3.3

Question 8.4: What was your opinion about each of the following aspects of the host country and the home country immediately before you went abroad? And what is your opinion now?

* On a scale from 1 = "highly positive opinion" to 5 "highly negative opinion"

Table 7.5
Opinions About Home Country Prior to and After the Study Period Abroad 1991/92, by Country of Home Institution of Higher Education (mean)

		Country of home institution											Total
		B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Higher education	prior	2.4	2.8	2.3	3.1	2.6	3.5	2.6	2.3	2.2	3.3	2.3	2.7
	after	2.4	2.6	2.0	3.0	2.5	3.2	2.8	1.8	2.0	3.4	2.3	2.6
Foreign policy	prior	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.1	2.6	3.3	3.4	2.8	2.6	3.0	3.2	2.9
	after	2.9	3.0	2.2	3.0	2.6	3.4	3.4	2.9	2.4	2.9	3.1	2.9
Cultural life	prior	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.2	2.5	3.1	2.8	2.7
	after	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.6	3.1	2.7	2.6
Media	prior	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.1	2.9
	after	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.7
Customs and traditions	prior	2.5	3.2	2.5	2.3	2.6	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.7	2.2	2.9	2.6
	after	2.7	3.1	2.2	1.9	2.7	1.7	2.2	1.9	2.5	2.0	2.8	2.5
Treatment of recently arrived immigrants	prior	3.3	3.6	3.1	3.1	3.5	2.8	3.4	2.6	2.9	2.5	3.4	3.3
	after	3.3	4.1	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.5	2.6	2.7	2.2	2.9	3.3
Social structure	prior	2.8	2.9	2.4	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.6	3.3	2.7
	after	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.3	3.3	2.6
Urban life	prior	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.3	2.9	2.4	3.1	3.3	2.9
	after	2.5	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.9	2.9	3.5	2.4	2.4	2.9	3.3	2.8
Government domestic policies	prior	3.2	3.3	2.7	3.9	3.3	3.6	3.9	3.9	2.8	3.2	3.6	3.4
	after	3.3	3.6	2.5	4.0	3.3	3.7	4.2	3.8	2.4	3.1	3.7	3.5
Environmental policies	prior	3.5	2.9	2.3	3.9	3.3	4.1	4.1	3.7	2.5	3.6	3.4	3.4
	after	3.4	2.4	1.9	4.3	3.2	4.2	4.3	3.5	2.2	3.9	3.4	3.3

Question 8.4: What was your opinion about each of the following aspects of the host country and the home country immediately before you went abroad? And what is your opinion now?

* On a scale from 1 = "highly positive opinion" to 5 "highly negative opinion"

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Altogether we might state that the study period in another EC country was instrumental in causing students to re-assess both the host and the home country and to change opinions on many aspects of the host country and, to a lesser extent, the home country as well. This did not lead, however, to more positive or more negative attitudes towards the host country or the home country overall. The value of the study period abroad in changing opinions seems to lie not in increasing sympathy towards other countries or towards the home country in general, but rather in the provision of opportunities for a broad range of experiences which might lead to changes of opinions on particular aspects of home and host country.

7.4 Personal Value of Study Abroad

Students were asked to state the extent to which they considered it worthwhile to study abroad for reasons such as study progress, career, foreign language proficiency, understanding the host country, travelling, or making a break from usual surroundings. They were asked to rate each of eleven aspects of the question on a scale from 1 = "extremely worthwhile" to 5 = "not at all worthwhile".

Altogether, ECTS students considered the study period abroad supported by the ERASMUS scheme as worthwhile. The average rating for all eleven aspects was 2.0, which could be called "worthwhile": the average rating of 1991/92 ECTS students was almost identical to that of ICP students and ECTS students of the previous years.

As Table 7.6 shows, acquaintance with people in the host country, foreign language proficiency (1.3 each), and knowledge and understanding of the host country (1.6) were most highly valued, while academic issues - although appreciated as well - were less positively viewed: exposure to other teaching methods was assessed as a more worthwhile academic outcome (1.8) than exposure to subject areas not offered at the home institution (2.5) and the impact on study progress after return (2.9).

The overall assessment varied only slightly by host country. ECTS students who spent their study period abroad in Germany and Denmark rated the overall value of the period spent abroad most positively (1.9 on average for all eleven items). Only those spending the study period in the Netherlands considered the value of this study period somewhat less favourably (2.2).

Differences in the assessment of the value of the study period abroad were also relatively small, as far as fields of study were concerned. However, as Table 7.7 shows, students enrolled in history highly appreciated the exposure to subject areas not offered at the home institution. Students in business administration found it particularly worthwhile for their career. Students in medicine found the study period abroad less worthwhile with regard to exposure to other subjects. Finally,

Table 7.6
Personal Value of Study Abroad 1991/92, by Host Country (mean*)

	Host country											Total
	B	D	DK	E	F	GR	I	IRL	NL	P	UK	
Other teaching methods than at home	2.0	1.7	1.5	2.4	2.0	1.7	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.5	1.8
Exposure to subjects not offered at home university	2.6	2.1	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.7	2.3	2.5
Study progress during study abroad	2.7	2.4	2.0	3.0	2.6	2.3	2.6	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.4	2.6
Study progress after return	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.0	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.4	2.7	2.9	2.9
Opportunity to travel	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.7	2.5	1.2	1.7	1.7
Career prospects	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.4	1.8	2.2	2.4	1.7	1.8	1.9
Acquaintance with people in another country	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.4	1.3
Foreign language proficiency	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.3
New perspectives on home country	2.1	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.2	3.0	2.0	2.2	2.1	1.8	2.2	2.1
Knowledge and understanding of the host country	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.7	1.6
Break from usual surroundings	1.7	1.6	2.3	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.8
(n)	(31)	(65)	(16)	(68)	(93)	(11)	(52)	(40)	(14)	(6)	(172)	(568)

Question 8.8: To what extent do you consider it was worthwhile for you to study abroad with regard to the following aspects?

* On a scale from 1 = "extremely worthwhile" to 5 "not at all worthwhile"

students in mechanical engineering found the period abroad less valuable for their study progress after return.

Asked to state their satisfaction with their study period abroad in general ("all things considered") on a scale from 1 = "very satisfied" to 5 = "not satisfied at all", 66 percent of the ECTS students rated it very positively. The average score was 1.4 (slightly better the score of 1.5 of the ECTS students of the preceding year). Only 3 percent (rating 4 or 5) were clearly dissatisfied with the study period abroad.

Table 7.7
Personal Value of Study Abroad in 1991/92, by Field of Study (mean*)

	Field of study					Total
	Business administration	History	Chemistry	Medicine	Mechanical engineering	
Other teaching methods than at home	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	2.0	1.8
Exposure to subjects not offered at home university	2.4	2.1	2.3	3.0	2.7	2.5
Study progress during study abroad	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.6
Study progress after return	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.8	3.2	2.9
Opportunity to travel	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7
Career prospects	1.6	2.2	1.8	2.3	1.8	1.9
Acquaintance with people in another country	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3
Foreign language proficiency	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
New perspectives on home country	2.1	1.8	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.1
Knowledge and understanding of the host country	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.6
Break from usual surroundings	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8
(n)	(152)	(68)	(95)	(146)	(107)	(568)

Question 8.8: To what extent do you consider it was worthwhile for you to study abroad with regard to the following aspects?
* On a scale from 1 = "extremely worthwhile" to 5 "not at all worthwhile"

7.5 Desired Duration of the ERASMUS Supported Period

Both the positive experiences during the study period abroad and the limits of what they could experience and achieve during their stay, led many students to wish for a longer stay abroad than initially intended or supported. Around 16 percent of the ECTS students actually had a longer stay abroad than originally planned (of about 4.8 months on average). In addition, 56 percent would have liked to extend it - on average for 7.2 months. If we calculate the sum of realised and desired duration, it resulted in about one year on average for both groups.

8

Summary

Students participating in the European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS) between 1989/90 and 1991/92, i.e. the first three years of ECTS, were surveyed some months after completion of their study period abroad. The written questionnaire was an adapted version of the one sent to ICP students in 1988/90 and 1990/91, extended by questions concerned with the formal mechanisms and recognition procedures of the ECTS scheme. This allows for a comparison of the findings of ECTS students from the three cohorts surveyed and for an analysis of the progress of the pilot programme in reaching its ambitious goals. On the other hand, a comparison of experiences of ECTS students and ERASMUS students surveyed in 1989/90 and 1990/91 who spent a period abroad in the framework of Inter-University Co-operation Programmes (ICPs) may lead to some insight views in the strength and weaknesses of the special mechanisms introduced in the ECTS scheme to ensure full recognition of study achievements abroad.

Of the 553 ECTS students participating in 1989/90, the 753 ECTS students in 1990/91 and the 883 ECTS students in 1991/92 about two-thirds in each cohort responded to the questionnaire.

More than half of the ECTS students were between 21 and 23 years old at the time they went abroad within the ECTS scheme. The average age reported varied between 23.0 years in the first year of ECTS and 23.5 years in the third year. Only about 10 percent of the students were on average older than 25 years. Across the average of the three years investigated, 56 percent of the ECTS students were male; about 40 percent of ECTS students' stated that at least one parent had been awarded a higher education degree. A large proportion of ECTS students had already spent some period abroad since the age of 15 (about 7 months on average including 2 months in the host country of the ECTS period abroad).

ECTS students in 1991/92 spent on average 8.3 months studying abroad (as compared to 8.9 months in 1990/91 and 8.2 months in 1989/90), with 64 percent spending more than six months abroad. Major motives for a study period abroad were learning a foreign language, self-development, improvement of career pros-

pects, desire to experience academic learning in another country and desire to enhance understanding of the host country. In this respect, ECTS students did not differ from ICP students. In selecting the host institution of higher education, ECTS students considered primarily the host country and their foreign language proficiency and, to a much lesser extent, the presumed reputation and quality of the host institution. Around 30 percent of the ECTS students surveyed went to the United Kingdom, about 20 percent to France and about 10 percent each to Spain and to Germany.

The rapid start of the ECTS programme in 1989/90 did not allow for adequate preparation to take place at the home institutions for the study period abroad in the first year of the ECTS pilot scheme. It improved in the second year, both in terms of increased preparatory means provided by the host institution (74% offering substantial preparation on average as compared to 62 %) and in terms of an increased proportion of students participating in preparatory meetings and courses (62 % as compared to 55 %). In the third year of the pilot programme, i.e. the year addressed by the most recent survey, the proportion of students reporting that they were provided with substantial preparatory means by their home institution decreased to the level reported in 1989/90, i.e. the year of the inauguration of ECTS (62 %). On the other hand, the proportion of students making use of organised ways of preparation was similar to those of the preceding year. Attendance in mandatory courses was stated in the third year of ECTS (20 %) even more often than in the prior years (14 % in 1990/91 and 15 % in 1989/90). Attendance in mandatory courses for preparation on the part ECTS students in 1991/92, however, remained clearly lower than on the part of ICP students in the preceding year (39 %).

The preparatory provisions were rated by the ECTS students 1991/92 on average as 3.1 on a scale from 1 = "very good" to 5 = "very poor". This obviously unenthusiastic rating remained similar to that for previous years (3.2 in 1990/91 and 3.0 in 1989/90). In general, assistance and advice provided by the respective home institution of higher education was more negatively assessed (3.2 on average) by the ECTS students than that provided by the host institution (2.7). These ratings were similar to those by ICP students participating in preceding surveys.

ECTS students had, as a rule, frequent contacts with the host institution students and teaching staff as well as with other persons of the host country. Various activities were undertaken for broadening their academic study and for getting acquainted with the host country culture and society. Therefore it is not surprising to note that most ECTS students felt well integrated into academic and social life abroad (average score of 2.2 on a scale from 1 = "to a great extent" to 5 = "not at all").

The ECTS students surveyed in 1991/92 were awarded an ERASMUS grant which covered 23.5 percent of the cost incurred during the study period abroad. In

the preceding year, the proportion of the expenses abroad covered by the ERASMUS grant was about 2 percent higher and in the first year of ECTS about 12 percent higher. Therefore, a larger proportion of expenses of ECTS in 1991/92 was covered by parents and the students' own resources as well as by home country fellowships.

On average, ECTS students in 1991/92 took 18.8 hours of courses per week abroad, ranging from 10.1 hours in history to 25.5 hours in chemistry. The total number of course hours was 3.1 less than that taken at home. The language of instruction was the host country language alone in 84 percent of the cases (in comparison to 65 % in the cases of the ICP students in 1990/91). This proportion is similar to that stated by ECTS students in previous years.

Serious problems regarding matters of credits and credits transfer were stated by about the same proportion of ECTS students 1991/92 as in the preceding year (17 % and 18 % respectively), but less frequently than by ECTS students in the year of the inauguration of the scheme (25 % in 1989/90). Most frequent problems stated by ECTS students 1991/92 referred to accommodation in the host country (20 %), financial matters, taking examinations in foreign language (19 % each) and differences of teaching and learning styles between the host and home institution (18 %). Altogether, students in the third year of ECTS mentioned academic problems less often than had ECTS students in previous years.

Calculation of academic achievements in terms of ECTS credits prior to the period abroad has not yet emerged to be a common practice in the institutions of higher education and their departments participating in the ECTS pilot programme. Only 23 percent of the students surveyed in 1991/92 reported that they were awarded ECTS credits by their home institution prior to the study period abroad. A regular practice of allocating credits in terms of the ECTS scheme to all courses of the whole study programme seems to have remained an exception.

Obviously, a substantial proportion of departments sent credit transcripts to the partner institution without informing their students: 42 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 did not know whether a transcript of records stating their prior achievements was sent from the home to the host institution. The respective figures were also 42 percent in 1990/91 and 31 percent in 1989/90. Only 12 percent of the students stated that they received a written statement stating their prior academic achievements in terms of ECTS credits. Other sources of data, i.e. information provided by ECTS co-ordinators, allow us, however, to conclude that almost all of those in charge of the ECTS scheme at the respective departments sent transcripts of records to their partner institution - in many cases, though, without providing a copy or another type of information to the students. According to the data made available by the participating ECTS institutions, for about 70 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 (as compared to about 50 % of the ECTS students 1990/91) written statements were provided before they went abroad.

It might be added here, that - again according to data made available by the institutions - a transcript of records stating ECTS credits or other types of calculation was provided by the host institutions for about 90 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 (80 % in 1990/91) upon completion of the study period abroad. Again, a substantial number of students neither knew that a written statement was sent from the host institution to the institution they were enrolled in after the period abroad nor that the host institution had awarded ECTS credits for their academic achievements abroad. Actually, 57 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 received a transcript stating ECTS credits and 15 percent another type of written statement. About 20 percent reported that they did not receive a written statement but their academic achievements were otherwise considered as equivalent and 8 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 stated that they did not receive a written statement from the host institutions (similar proportion as stated by co-ordinators).

The two types of data available do not allow any firm conclusion about the extent to which the formal procedures of credit transfer were not applied by the institution. Obviously, a substantial proportion of ECTS students felt there was a problem regarding the transparency of application of credit transfer.

An information package on the host institution was made available to almost two-thirds of the ECTS students 1991/92 prior to their application. Another 12 percent received the information package before the selection and 22 percent after the selection for the period abroad. In general the degree of satisfaction with the quality of the information package provided by the host institution was not very high (2.9 on a scale from 1 = "very satisfied" to 5 = "very dissatisfied"). The utility of the information package for the choice of the host institution and the courses to be taken abroad was rated somewhat better (2.5).

About 80 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92 had their programme of study approved either by the ECTS co-ordinator of their home institution (12 %) or by the co-ordinator of the host institution (24 %) or by both the co-ordinator at the home and at the host institution (44 %). A further 18 percent reported that no formal approval of the programme of study was necessary because of free choice of courses. Finally 3 percent stated that they did not have approval of their programme of study although in principal they were required to do so.

Students in 1991/92 were admitted to 95 percent of the courses they had chosen originally, but 59 percent of the students also courses at the host university that they had not intended to take at the beginning of their stay abroad (45 % of the ECTS students 1990/91 and 55 % of the ECTS students 1989/90). Obviously, information provided during the initial weeks at the host institution had a strong impact in terms of revising choices made prior to the sojourn. Most students stated positive reasons for changing courses, mainly in terms of interesting courses, alternatives to study programme at home, good fit with their area of specialisation, while some named problems such as the academic level of the courses and lan-

guage problems. Some 64 percent of the ECTS students in 1991/92 however, reported that at least one of the courses they followed abroad were less demanding than similar courses taken at home (28 % of all courses taken fell into this category).

ECTS students in 1991/92 who responded to the questions regarding implicit or explicit acceptance of prior achievements by the host institution (about three quarters) stated that 89 percent of these prior achievements were accepted (similar as in previous years of ECTS). While abroad, students were granted on average 96 percent of the credits allocated to the courses they actually took. The figures here are reported with some caution, because only about 60 percent of the students responding provided information both on the amount of ECTS credits allocated to courses and the amount actually awarded. Respective figures provided by the participating institutions on a "Technical Data Sheet Form" were less positive: according to this source, students lost 10 percent of the credits originally allocated for a variety of reasons. The awards corresponded on average to 57 credits annually according to the students but only to 50 credits annually according to the co-ordinators' reports.

The average number of credits transferred (i.e. accepted by the institution ECTS students were enrolled in for the subsequent academic year) was 91 percent of those awarded during the study period abroad 1991/92 (95 % each in 1990/91 and 1989/90). According to the co-ordinators' reports, 100 percent of the ECTS credits awarded by the host institutions were recognised by the institutions in which the students were enrolled in the subsequent year.

Achievements during the study abroad period 1991/92 were rated to correspond on average to 83 percent of those expected during a corresponding period at home (as compared to 84 % in 1990/91 and 86 % in 1989/90). The prolongation of the total period of study was expected to amount to 27 percent on average of the study period abroad (23 % in 1990/91 and 29 % in 1989/90). These figures are similar to those of ECTS students 1989/90 but compared favourably to those reported on average by ICP students 1990/91 (74 % degree of recognition, 72 % degree of correspondence and 46 % expected prolongation).

ECTS students 1991/92 rated their academic progress abroad more positively than academic progress during a corresponding period at home: 2.6 on average on a scale from 1 = "much better" to 5 = "much less". This was slightly better than the ratings by ECTS students of the previous years (2.7 each). ECTS students' ratings, however, were somewhat less positive than those by the ICP students in 1990/91 (2.5). These findings of ECTS students being awarded a higher extent of recognition, though rating their achievements abroad slightly less favourably than ICP students, invites various different interpretations.

Knowledge on the host country culture and society increased substantially during the study period abroad according to the ECTS students' ratings. Opinions

on various aspects of culture and society, both of the host and the home country, did not change on average during the study period abroad, because the changes observed were spread equally positively and negatively. In all these respects, ratings by the ECTS students 1991/92 were almost identical on average to those by the ECTS and ICP students of the previous years.

The personal value of study abroad was viewed positively by most ECTS students. Acquaintance with the host country and language proficiency were most highly valued, while academic issues were less positively viewed. The overall satisfaction with the study period was very positive in the case of 66 percent of the ECTS students 1991/92. The average score of 1.5 on a scale from 1 = "very satisfied" to 5 = "very dissatisfied" was slightly better than the rates reported by ECTS and ICP students in the previous years.

As regards fields of study, we note that students in business administration most often stated the improvement of career prospects as a major motive for studying abroad. They were also most likely to take courses for academic preparation purposes and courses at the host institution involving new teaching methods not available at the home university. Travelling in the host country was more frequent among business students than among students in other subjects. However, the loss of ECTS credits through failing exams or not completing courses were highest among students in business administration; this might be attributed to the comparatively low correspondence between the study abroad to the study which typically could have been expected at the home institution.

History students did not assess their means of preparation very favourably. They faced more problems in taking examinations in a foreign language and problems of administrative matters as well as problems of accommodation; they also expected most prolongation of study due to the study abroad period than students in any other ECTS discipline. Finally, they seemed to appreciate more than average the value of being exposed to subject matter not offered at home.

Chemistry students, too, did not assess their preparation very favourably. They took fewer courses abroad for the purpose for broadening their academic and cultural experiences and more often developed a new area of specialisation. Selection of courses was mostly done with the help of the co-ordinators, and the proportion of chemistry students provided a written statement by the home institution, containing their prior achievements was higher than in the other fields. The correspondence of the study abroad to the work load they had expected at the home institution was high, and almost all the credits awarded to them while abroad were transferred to the institution they were enrolled in subsequently. Therefore chemistry students stated fewer problems of credit transfer. However, they expected an above-average prolongation of their overall study period due to the period abroad.

Medical students were most often informed by other students about the ECTS programme. Participation in preparatory courses or meetings was low, and medical students took fewer courses abroad involving content not available at home than students in other fields. They took fewer courses abroad which were less demanding than those at home. Medical students, together with those enrolled in history, expected more prolongation of study due to the study abroad period than students enrolled in other fields.

Students enrolled in mechanical engineering stated foreign language learning most frequently as the major motive for their stay abroad and their participation in preparatory courses and meetings was higher for students in other fields of study. Accommodation was stated as their most serious problem abroad. Matters of credits and credit transfer were least often mentioned as a problem, and the expected prolongation of the study period was lowest. However, students in mechanical engineering were most reluctant in considering the study period abroad a worthwhile experience. Also, they rated academic progress abroad as well as academic progress upon return least favourably.

As regards home country, the level of preparatory provisions was highest in Ireland, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Italy with fewer provisions in this respect made for Danish and Spain students. No provision of a written statement on the previous achievements by the home institution was most often reported by students from Germany, the Netherlands and Spain while only few students from Greece, and Ireland were not provided with such a statement. Expected prolongation of study was highest for Greek, Dutch and German students. Greek, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese students appreciated academic progress most highly. As already noted in regard to the responses by the ICP students, students from southern European countries seem to consider the quality of higher education abroad somewhat higher than in their home country.

As regards host country, we note that a substantial proportion of courses which the ECTS students took in Denmark, Greece and the Netherlands were not taught in the host country language. Students going to Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom appreciated frequent contacts with host academic staff while students spending the period abroad in Denmark, Germany and Ireland rated the quality of accommodation most positively. Fewest administrative problems were perceived by students going to the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Greece. Academic integration was felt most successful by students spending a study period in the Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Students going to Denmark, Belgium, Greece and Italy were least likely to follow less demanding courses while more demanding courses were most often experienced by students going to Denmark. Students' knowledge on the host country was found to be lower for the smaller EC countries. Among the major

host countries, higher education in Germany and cultural life in Spain were most positively assessed.

It remains to be seen whether gaps regarding implementation of the formal mechanisms of the ECTS scheme, gaps regarding preparatory provisions as well as the frequent choice of less demanding courses abroad than those at home are temporary phenomena in the initial phase, i.e. the first two or three years of the pilot programme, or whether they will persist. Although ECTS students received substantial support and assistance abroad as well as regarding matters of study and living conditions abroad, a considerable proportion of them reported academic problems. Award of recognition had clearly a higher profile in the ECTS pilot scheme than on average within the framework of ICPs but when viewed in relation to the ambitious goals of the ECTS pilot scheme, further improvement is certainly desirable.

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16a. Les programmes ERASMUS en matière de mobilité des étudiants au cours de l'année 1989/90. Analyse présentée à partir des points de vue des coordinateurs.
(in English cf. Monograph No. 16)

F. Maiworm, W. Steube, U. Teichler
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17. Experiences of ERASMUS Students1990/91
(in French cf. Monograph No. 17a)

F. Maiworm, W. Steube, U. Teichler
Werkstattberichte, 42, Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung, Kassel 1993

Contact: Prof. Ulrich TEICHLER, cf. Monograph No. 1

17a. Les expériences des étudiants ERASMUS en 1990/91
(in English cf. Monograph No. 17)

F. Maiworm, W. Steube, U. Teichler
Werkstattberichte, 42a, Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung, Kassel 1993

Contact: Prof. Ulrich TEICHLER, cf. Monograph No. 1

18. **Transition to Work: The Experiences of Former ERASMUS Students**

U. Teichler, F. Maiworm

Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London 1993

Contact: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 118 Pentonville Road, UK-London N1 9JN, Tel.: 44-71833 2307, Fax 44-71-837 2917

19. **ERASMUS Student Mobility Programmes 1991/92 in the View of the Local Directors**

F. Maiworm and U. Teichler
Werkstattberichte, 46, Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung, Kassel 1995

Contact: Prof. Ulrich TEICHLER, cf. Monograph No. 1

20. **The First Years of ECTS in the View of the Students**

F. Maiworm and U. Teichler
Werkstattberichte, 47, Wissenschaftliches Zentrum für Berufs- und Hochschulforschung, Kassel 1995

Contact: Prof. Ulrich TEICHLER, cf. Monograph No. 1

The European Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was inaugurated in 1989 as an ambitious pilot scheme in the framework of the ERASMUS programme. It aims to ensure highest possible mutual recognition of all achievements for students spending a period of study in another European country through improved information, co-ordination of curricula and standardised procedures of reporting study achievements. This study, based on the analyses of responses to written questionnaires, provides an overview on the experiences of the first three generations of ECTS students.

Das Europäische System zur Anrechnung von Studienleistungen (ECTS) wurde 1989 als ein anspruchsvolles Pilotprojekt im Rahmen des ERASMUS-Programms etabliert. Es versucht, möglichst weitgehende wechselseitige Anrechnung aller Studienleistungen für mobile Studierende mit Hilfe verbesserter Information, Abstimmung von Studienangeboten und elaborierter Regeln zur Berichterstattung über Studienleistungen zu sichern. Die vorliegende Studie, die auf den Ergebnissen schriftlicher Befragungen basiert, bietet eine Übersicht über die Erfahrungen der ersten drei Generationen von ECTS-Studierenden.

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